

Several Letters ^{cap. 2.}

Written by some

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French Protestants

Now Refug'd in

GERMANY

FROM THE

Tyrannical Persecution of *FRANCE*,

Concerning the

Unity of the Church.



I. To the PROTESTANTS
of *England* in General.

II. To the same.

III. To the same.

IV. To the PRESBYTERIANS
of *England*.

V. To the Archbishops and
Bishops of the Church
of *England*.

VI. To the HOUSE of LORDS
and COMMONS
now ASSEMBLED in
PARLIAMENT.

VII. To His HIGHNESS the
PRINCE of ORANGE,
Now KING of *England*.

Dedicated to the LORD BISHOP of LONDON.

Translated from the French, by P. B. Gent.

Licens'd Novemb. 22. 1689.

James Fraser.

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History of the Church

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY J. W. KELLOGG
PUBLISHED BY THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
1844

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T O

My LORD BISHOP of LONDON.

My Lord,

I have not Ballanc'd in my Choice to whom I should Address these Letters, I presently imagin'd that no Person could be so proper as you, to procure to them a favourable reception, and to make them serve to that Design for which they were Writ. That Dignity you possess in the *Church of England*, The Rank which you hold in the Parliament, The Esteem that all *England* has for you, and that Justice which that Great Prince your Liberator renders Himself to your Merits; all this, *My Lord*, could not fail to make me Resolved on this Choice, should I have had no other Reasons. But give me leave to say, that in this occasion, I have had more Regard to your Personal Qualities, than to all that I have now alledg'd.

All the World knows, *My Lord*, that God has happily Assembled in your Person, all the Qualities of a good Christian, and those of a good Prelate; and that you Religiously follow the Traces of those Holy Bishops, which made their Virtue to be admired in the first Ages of Christianity, and for whose Memory the Church still to this Day preserves so great a Veneration. Like them, you Watch Day and Night with an extream Application over that Flock of which the Lord has given you the Care and Conduct; and you forget nothing to forward the Sanctification and Salvation of it. Like them, you are equally in Edification to the Church by your Ministry, and your Exemplary Life. Finally, like them, you are ever constant and unmoveable in your Duty, so that no Human Consideration is capable to divert you from it.

Who can doubt of this, that has seen that Resolution, that Admirable Firmness, with which you resisted of late the Power of Unjust Judges, who would have rendered you equally Guilty of their Unjust Practices, and oblig'd you to Concur with them, in the Designs of a Court wholly devoted to Popery? How Worthy of you was this Action, *My Lord*, worthy that Great Reputation of Piety, of

The Epistle DEDICATORY.

Zeal, of Probity, and of Virtue, which you had already acquired. And how Glorious was that SUSPENSION which you did undergo with so much Courage?

I dare not say all that I think, *My Lord*, I know how great your Modesty is, and I should fear to offend it, giving you all the Praises which are due to you. I shall only add, that one of the greatest Motives that I have had to Chuse you for Protector to these Letters, is the Love which you have for Peace, and for the Unity of the Church.

Your Charity, *My Lord*, is equal to your Piety. It is that Charity, with which your Heart is inflam'd, which makes you Consider'd as the Father of the Poor. It is that which has been the Refuge of divers Thousands of our Brothers, which the greatest Persecution that ever was seen, has forc'd to abandon both their Wealth and their Country to follow Christ, and to cleave to the Possession of his Holy Gospel. And it is the same also which Inspires in you Desires of Moderation and of Peace towards the Presbyterians, and which makes you so Ardently to Wish to see them Reunited to your Church.

I have therefore all reason to hope, *My Lord*, that Letters which have no other Aim but to forward that Re-Union, will not displease you; and if you believe they can produce any Fruit, you will be pleas'd to take upon you the Care to Present them to the Parliament, and to his Highness the Prince of Orange, with the further trouble to Communicate them to those other Persons whom you shall think fit to impart them. May it please God to accompany them with the Power of his Holy Spirit, and to give them an happy success!

May God, also, *My Lord*, fill you with his most precious Blessings; and Preserve you, during the course of many Years, for his Glory, and the Good of his Church! I am with a Profound Respect,

My Lord,

Your most Humble and most

Obedient Servant, N.

From——the 12th
of January, 1688.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THese Letters were writ at the time of their Date, that is, in January 1683. before that Convention of ENGLAND was assembled; and consequently before the King and Queen, now Reigning so gloriously in Great Britain, were rais'd on the Throne. They were also printed and sent to London in that very time. But some persons of great worth, to whom they were communicated, thought fit not to render them so soon publick, as to stay, to that end, till the Affairs of the Kingdom would admit of a serious Consideration in the Re-establishment of the Peace in the Church.

The time being come to work on that great Design, it has been thought that they might be of use to the PUBLICK, that they were not to be conceal'd from it any longer. Therefore they are now bestow'd on it, without any alteration; tho' they contain divers things, which are now out of season, after so great a Charge as has hapn'd even in the publick Affairs.

For Example, there is mention made in them of the King of England, under the Denomination of Prince of Orange, which, at that time, was his Name; and it is under that Name that the last Letter is directed to that great Monarch. In that which is directed to the Lords and Commons of England, it is desired, They should faithfully preserve the Crown, for the true Blood of their Kings; That they give a sufficient Liberty of Conscience to the Presbyterians; That at the same time they employ all the Rigor of the Laws against Popery; yet Tolerate such Papists as would live amongst them as good and honest Citizens, and in a due Submission to the Laws: All this has been done by the Convention, or by that Parliament that has succeeded it. It is also requir'd, That Commissioners be nam'd to labour in the Re-union of the Presbyterians to the Church of England; and that is what has been done by the KING, after the separation of Parliament.

The Reader had doubtless of himself observ'd all that has been said, without Advertisement; and he will easily take notice in the Letters of divers other things of the same Nature, which there is no necessity to mention here. It has been thought convenient to insist on two only, of which it is necessary to give some Information in few words.

The first thing is, what is said in the 4th and 5th Letter, concerning the Zeal with which the Bishops have oppos'd the Re-establishment of Popery, of their Charity toward the Presbyterians, and of the Love they have for Peace; unto which it is suppos'd they are in a condition to sacrifice some of their Opinions and Customs. There are a few persons found, that maintain the Bishops are not well known; and that it is rather in hatred to the Presbyterians, than to the Papists; That they have oppos'd themselves to King James II's Declaration, concerning Liberty of Conscience. They allow for proof of that, the Refusal which divers amongst them have made, to take the Oath which this present KING now Reigning requir'd of them; and they pretend, that Refusal is grounded on the Fear they have that His MAJESTY having been brought amongst the Presbyterians of Holland, he might be too favourable to those of Eng-
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there are some who go further yet, and say, that this way of proceeding is an effect of that secret Affection which the Bishops have for a Popish King, and even for Popery itself.

But what reason is there to accuse the Bishops to have less Hatred for the Papists, than for the Presbyterians? What have they done which can give place to so Odious a suspicion, to have such a Tendency for Popery, and that they have a design to favour it? Such a Scandalous Accusation ought not to be propos'd, without convincing Proofs; and to justify those Prelats, that their Enemies cannot alledge any thing capable of making the least Impression in the Minds of just Persons.

That Constancy with which they have oppos'd themselves to that Declaration we have mention'd, is, on the contrary, whatever is said of it, a proof which ought to convince the whole World of their Hatred against Popery, and of their Zeal for the Protestant Religion. Can Equity suffer, that such a Constancy should be Imputed to the Hatred which some pretend they have against the Presbyterians? And is it not the greatest of all injustice, to Tarnish so Glorious an Action with the wrong sense which is given to it, without the least appearance of Reason?

It is in vain to produce the refusal which some Prelats have made to take the Oaths to the present King; we pretend not here to approve nor to excuse, what they have done; but it will not be difficult to say, that it is found very worthy of Reproof: Neither do any one pretend to seek after the Reasons of it. But whatever they are, must the fault of some particulars be imputed to a whole Body, to so illustrious a Body as that of the Bishops of England? And generally speaking, can it be denied that those Bishops are good Protestants and good Subjects?

In fine, it is declar'd, that what has been said, of the Bishops fighting after Re-U. and disposition to lay aside, to that purpose, some of their Opinions and Practices, on those Informations which have been receiv'd from London, and from very good hands.

Those Conferences which will be made on that subject, will be a Touchstone, which will discover, whether these Intelligences were just.

The Second thing which ought to be rendered clear is, to shew it is the Presbyterians who are to return to the Episcopal Church, rather than the Bishops to go over to the Presbyterian Church. It is alledged in the Fourth Letter, that the Episcopal Church has on its side the Laws, and Possession; whereas the Presbyterian Church has neither Possession, nor Laws, on its side, and that on the contrary the Laws are wholly opposit to it; and it is no longer true, it will be said, since the King and Parliament have made a New Law, to permit to the Nonconformists the exercise of their Religion; so that this reason can no longer be offer'd.

To this is answer'd, That it is true, the Laws are no longer contrary to the Presbyterians; but that the Liberty which the Laws give them, far from dissuading them, to unite with the Bishops, it ought rather to dispose their Minds to this Rennon. It was that Ground that a Liberty of Conscience was desired for them from the Lords and Commons, as may be seen in the Sixth Letter. When all is done, That Toleration which is granted to the Presbyterians by the New Laws, takes not any of the Rights of the Church of England from it, and lessens not its Privileges. It is still the same Root of the Tree, to which all the Boughs are to be united. It is still the predominant

Church, and its Religion is still the Religion of the State. So that tho' this Church no Condescension for the Presbyterians, and that She should relinquish nothing of her Ceremonies, nor Customs, they would still be oblig'd to Reunite themselves to Her; They could not lawfully remain separated from it, except it was guilty of Heresie, Idolatry or Tyranny, as it is express'd in these Letters.

The Authors of those Letters, however, persist in the Sentiment they have follow'd in them; that, to succeed in the design of the Reunion of the PROTESTANT of England, all Parties ought to relinquish something on their part: It is by that way only, that hopes can be entertain'd to work in it with success. God be pleas'd to inspire both Parties, that they may breathe nothing but Peace and Charity.

Letters writ into *England*, by some *French* Protestants retired into *Germany*, from the *French* Persecution, concerning the *Unity of the Church*.

The First Letter.

TO THE
Protestants of *ENGLAND* in General.

Our most Dear Brethren,

THere is nothing more deplorable than *Schism*, and when God permits it to disturb the Church, it is to be consider'd as one of the most terrible Scourges of his Wrath; Who would not then be concern'd to see *Christendom* in that condition it is in at present? To see not only the *East* separated from the *West*, since so many Ages; not only in our *Western* parts, the *Protestant Church* separated from the *Roman Church*; not only in the *Protestant Church*, the *Reformed* separated from the *Lutherans*: But, moreover, those *Reformed*, separated one from another, to form divers different Societies. Who would not be mov'd, above all, to see the *Church of England*, that Flourishing Church, which makes so considerable a part of the *Reformed Church*, separated in two Bodies, who have no External Communion amongst them? Not to mention divers little *Sects* which have risen from them, and increased the Division.

All the Reformed in *Europe* look on this Division and Separation, with a deep sorrow; and, for our parts, tho' it should seem that the Sense of our own Evils would render us less sensible to that of others; We are yet touch'd to the quick, with that Division which reigns in your Church. Would to God, *our dear Brethren*, that we who are sadly disperfed, might contribute something to the Cure of your Wounds! That would be a Consolation, that would, in some measure, sweeten the Bitterness of our Souls.

We are persuaded, that your Selves sigh most ardently after Peace; and that your Divisions are to be attributed to your Enemies Intrigues, rather than to your own Inclinations. You, doubtless, are not ignorant, That *Schism* is entirely oppos'd to *Charity*, which is as the Soul of Christian Religion; and to the Will of Christ, which being *Charity* itself, will have us to be animated with a *Charity* like his. But seeing the Condition your CHURCH is in, is a Testimony you have not sufficiency of Horror for *Schism*; permit us to address some Reflections to you, which we have made on this Subject, and which ought to oblige you to reunite your selves all into one Communion.

Christ Jesus, to move us to the practice of *Charity*, makes an Elogy of that excellent Virtue in divers places of the Gospel. It is in *Charity* that he includes all the Duties which God requires of us in his Law, and in the Writings of the Prophets. It is to *Charity* that he promises Life Everlasting when he is consulted, to know what is to be done to obtain it; and it is by their *Charity* also that he would have his Disciples known.

But that which expresses most, how acceptable *Charity* is to him, and how much he is pleas'd with Unity and Peace in his Church, was, his making but one people of the Jews and Gentiles, which, before his coming to the World, were separated one from the other, with a Bar which God had set with his own hands, which, till then, could not be broken down. It may also be said, That the great Design for which he is come, was to assemble all the people on Earth into one Church, as a Shepherd gathers his Sheep in one Sheepfold, and makes of them but one Flock. This is the Comparison which he has been pleas'd to use himself, when speaking of the Gentiles, he said, *That he had other sheep which were not of that sheepfold*; that is, of the Jewish Church; which he was also to bring thither, that they would hear his voice; and there would be one only flock, and one only shepherd.

St. Paul represents the same thing under other Similitudes, very proper to shew not only the Unity of the Church in general, but also the strict Union of its parts amongst themselves.

He sometimes represents the Church, as a Building. It is, says he, a City, of which Christ has made the Jews and Gentiles Citizens, having broke down the partition-wall which separated them from one another. It is a Church built on the Apostles, and on the Prophets; or, rather on Christ, who is the Corner-stone of that Foundation, in whom all the Building compleat together, groweth into an Holy Temple in the Lord.

Sometimes he considers it as one single human Body, as a Body of which Christ is the Head, and the Believers the Members, 1 Cor. xii. *As the Body is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of the Body, which is one, tho' they be many, yet are but one Body, even so is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all Baptiz'd in one Body.* After that, having observ'd, that tho' the Members of the Body are different one from the other, they are all necessary, that God has diversly plac'd them as he pleas'd; and that we Honour the most those that are less Honourable; he adds, that God has set that Order in the Members, *Left there should be any Division in the Body, but that the Members should have the same Care one for another.* And immediatly after he thus goes on, *If one Member suffer, all suffer with him; if one Member be had in Honour, all the Members rejoice with it. Now we are the Body of Christ, and Members for your part.*

In another place he Wishes, Ephes. iv. that, following Truth in Charity we grow up in all things in the Lord, who is the Head; by which, continues he, the Body being well United into a perfect Man, and into the measure of the Age of the fulness of Christ by Charity. And a little before in the Argument which he had drawn from that Idea which he gave of the Church, he represents it as the Body of Christ; he had added divers other Motives to lead us to Charity, to Peace, and Union. He had said, *I therefore, being a Prisoner in the Lord, Pray you, that you walk worthy of the Vocation whereunto you are call'd, with all Humbleness of Mind, and Meekness, with long Suffering, supporting one another through Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* This is the Exhortation which he gives us, and these are the strong Motives that he insists upon, *There is one Body and one Spirit; he adds presently after, Even as ye are called in hope of your Vocation. There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, which is all, and through all, and in you all.*

You see, our Dearly Beloved Brethren, how many Motives that Holy Apostle uses, to infuse into us a Love to Unity; whence it is easie to infer, That that Schism which broke the Bonds of Unity, cannot but be infinitely guilty; what Crime is it not, what Sacrilege, to Violate that Charity which Christ has recommended to us with so much Care, thus to disperse his Flock; thus to divide his Dear Jerusalem, his Holy Temple, thus to tear his Mystical Body.

Yet we are not to forget, that what Love soever we ought to have for Unity, we are oblig'd more to have for Love, Truth and Piety. That conserves the Glory of God, and our own Salvation, to preserve them both; and those are such great Concerns, that we ought to prefer them to all things.

St. Paul who so earnestly recommends to us Unity, joins Truth with Charity in one of those places that we have Cited; Ephes. iv. 15. and by that shews, that Charity has its Bounds, and that it never ought to go so far, as to make us preserve Unity to the prejudice of Truth. And in another place he enjoins us, *To avoid him who is an Heretick.* That is to say, doubtless, not to have any Conversation with *Tit. iii. 10.* such a one, above all, in Religion.

He is not less Jealous of the Concerns of Piety, than of Truth; and that is the reason why he forbids us to have any Communion with the Idolaters; *You*

1 Cor. x. 21.

cannot Drink, says he, the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of the Devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the Table of the Devils. He Concludes, in one place, to the Celebration of the Holy Communion; and in the other, to those Feasts which the Heathens made in the Solemnity of their Sacrifices; and he would give us to understand, that we cannot partake in no manner of the Worship of the Idols, without Renouncing the Worship of the Lord, and consequently, without destroying of Piety.

2 Cor. iv.

In an other place he speaks yet more to the purpose on the same subject; and he expressly Teaches us, that we ought to Separate from the Infidels and the Idolaters. Be not unequally Yoked with the Infidels, says he, for what Fellowship has Righteousness with Unrighteousness? And what Communion has Light with Darkness? And what Concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the Believer with the Infidel? And what Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? For ye are the Temple of the Living God; as God has said, I will Dwell amongst them, and Walk there, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. Wherefore, come out from amongst them, and Separate your selves, says the Lord, and touch no Unclean thing, and I will receive you. And I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Gal. i. 8, 9.

In general, St. Paul will have, That if any one does Preach to us any other Doctrines than those which are contain'd in the Gospel, which we have received, which must be Infallibility understood, as to the Doctrines of Faith, and those that relate to the Worship; that we should pronounce Anathema against him; were he an Apostle, a Paul; were he an Angel of Heaven.

But it is necessary to Observe, that when we say, according to the Doctrin of that Apostle, That we are to prefer Truth and Piety before Unity; that is, to be understood but of the Essence of Truth, and of the Evangelical Piety; that is to say, to that which Christian Religion has Essential in it, and without which it cannot subsist. There are some Doctrines and Practices which give a just occasion of Separation: And therefore, they which overturn the Fundamental Truths of Christianity, or that are incompatible with true Piety; such as are the Capital Errors of Hereticks, and the Impieties of Idolaters. But there are others, which as contrary as they are either to Truth or to Piety, suffer still the Ground and Essence of Religion to subsist; such as are the weak Errors, and certain Superstitious Practices; and it would be Unjust and Criminal to Separate from ones Brethren for Errors or Practices of that Nature.

Rom. xiv. &
1 Cor. viii. 10.

It is still the Doctrin of the same Apostle, At the same time that he Orders us to avoid Hereticks, and to Separate from Idolaters, as before; he will have us on the contrary, To Receive such as are Weak in the Faith, and that we sute our selves to their Practices, for fear of being Scandalous to them.

We must then acknowledg, that according to the Doctrin of St. Paul, there are two kinds of Separation; the one is lawful, and allowed of, and likewise very

very necessary ; the other is unjust and Criminal, and consequently forbidden. The lawful Separation, is that by which we preserve the Essence of the Truth, of the Christian Faith, and of Piety, or of the Evangelick Worship ; they Renounce the Communion of Hereticks and Idolaters, who wholly Ruin Faith and Piety by their false Principles, and by their false Worship. And the unjust Separation is that, by which they separate themselves from a Society, or from a Person, who Reserves all the Essence of Truth and Godliness, tho' there may be something to be taken away either in Doctrine, or Practice.

One and the other of these Separations may be made, either by way of Retrenchment, or by means of letting them alone. The Separation by way of Retrenching is no other thing than Excommunication ; and Separation by way of laying them aside, is made, when we abandon of our selves a Society, with which we will have no Communion.

The Catholicks Anciently Separated themselves from the *Arrians* by way of Retrenching, when they Anathematized those Hereticks in the famous Council of *Nice*. And in latter times our Fathers Separated themselves from the *Roman Church*, by the way of having nothing to do with them ; when they forsook the Communion, to render to God the true Worship he required of his Children. And these Two Separations were both very lawful.

Was there any thing more Just than to Excommunicate the *Arrians* ? That to Expell them from the Bosome of the *Catholick Church* those Hereticks who denied the Eternal Divinity of the Son of God, and who Ruined by that means all the Mystery of our Redemption ? That way they Undermined the Foundations of the Christian Religion, and quite overturned it.

But was there any thing more Just than to forsake the Communion of the *Roman Church* ? Of a Church that Taught an infinite number of Capital Errors in their Doctrines ; whose Worship was full of Superstition, and Idolatry, and whose Government was degenerated to an insufferable Tyranny ? Their Communion was brought to that point, that their Communion could no longer be but dreadful, *Apoc. 18. 2. & 17. 5. She was become a Dwelling for Devil, and the Mother of Fornications, and of all the Abominable things of the World.* And then it was our most happy Ancestors made a Separation. They Obeyed the Heavenly Voice, that Cried to them, *To depart from that Wicked Babylon, for fear they should partake of their Wickedness, and be involved in their Wounds, Apoc. 18. 4.*

But on the other side the *Arrians* Separated themselves from the *Catholick Church*, by way of laying them aside ; when they began to have Separate Assemblies. And the *Roman Church* did Separate her self from our Fathers, by way of Retrenching ; for she Anathematized them in the Council of *Trent*. And both these Separations were very Unjust and very Criminal, because both in one and the other they divided from that Party that professed Truth and Godliness ; and that they Separated to cast themselves into Error and Ungodliness.

It is not only the Separation of Hereticks and Idolaters, which is Unjust and Criminal ; that of the Schismatics is also guilty, whether they break the Bonds of the Communion with all the rest of the Church, or only with some

Church, or some particular person, about indifferent things, such as make not the essential part of Religion.

Such was the Separation of the *Novatists*, who in the bottom retaining the whole Essence of Faith, and of Piety, did separate themselves from the Body of the Catholick Church, because it received to its Communion, and to its Peace, those that were fallen during the Persecution; and did admit to the participation of the Holy Communion those who had sinned after Baptism, and afterwards expressed a repentance of their Errors. For, not to say here that the Catholicks were in the right in the Conclusion, that was but a dispute of Discipline, which consequently touched not the essential part of Christianity.

Such also was the Separation of the *Donatists*, who abandon'd the Society of the same Catholicks, under pretence of some personal Faults, of which they accus'd *Cecilianus*, Bishop of *Carthage*, or those from whom he had received the Episcopal Ordination; which Accusations they could never prove, as St. *Austin* reproches them in divers places.

Such, in Fine, has been the Separation of divers other Sects, which, from time to time, have rent the Church by their Schisms, under vain and ridiculous pretences.

We have now seen, *Dearly Beloved Brethren*, what St. *Paul's* Doctrine was concerning the *Unity of the Church*; We shall see in another Letter, if it pleases the Lord, what has been both the Doctrine and practice of the primitive Church on that; and will examin, at the same time, of what Nature that Separation is, which parts your Church; whether it is Legitimate, or Unjust. In the mean time we shall pray to God, with Fervency, to return to it his peace. We are, in all sincerity, our *Dearly Beloved Brethren*,

A — Jan. 1.
1683.

Your most humble, and most obedient,
And most affectionate Brethren in the Lord.

The SECOND LETTER to the same.

Dearly Beloved Brethren;

AT the latter end of our First Letter, we did engage to shew in this, what has been the Doctrine and the practice of the primitive Church, in regard of the point of Unity. To acquit our selves of our promise, we shall now say, That the Bishops of the First Ages had rightly apprehended the difference there is betwixt a lawful Separation, and an unjust; And that they believ'd conformably to St. *Paul*, That they ought to separate for Capital Errors, such as overturned the Foundation of Christian Religion; but that the Bonds of Communion were not to be broken, nor for indifferent Things, nor for slight Errors, nor for such practices which did not destroy the ground of piety.

Those holy Bishops did pronounce their *Anathema's* against the *Hereticks*, they would hold no Communion with them; but they did not separate themselves from

from their Collegues about Questions which concern'd not the Essence of Christianity.

St. Cyprian, for Example, had such an horror against *Hereticks*, that, far from having any Communion with them, while they persisted in their Heresie, he received them not to his Communion, when they converted themselves, but after he had Re-baptiz'd them. He pretended, that the *Hereticks* being out of the Church, they could have nothing in common with it, and that consequently they had no real Baptism. *If the Hereticks are in the Church, and embrace its Interests*, said he, in that Letter which he did write on that purpose to *Jubianus*, *They may make use of its Baptism, and of the other Benefits that it has received: But if they are not in the Church, and that on the contrary they conspire against it, How can they baptize with the Church Baptism?* But, in the mean time, that great Man did not believe that he was to separate from such who in the same point were of another Opinion than he was, and who follow'd another practice than his, and he always remained united in Communion with them: *This is my* Ibid. *dearly beloved Brother*, said he to the same *Jubianus*, who had consulted him on that point, *What we have thought we might answer you, according to our weakness; not that we pretend for this to prescribe any thing to any person, nor hinder any Bishops from doing what he shall judge fit, seeing he is Master of his actions. For, as far as in us lies, we shall have no dispute on that with our Collegues the Bishops, with whom we desire to live always in peace and unity, according to the Command of the Lord, &c.*

The great and holy Bishop did preserve that Spirit of Union and Peace, after he had been ill treated by *Stephen* Bishop of *Rome*. This had Excommunicated him, because of his Opinion concerning repeating the Baptism of *Hereticks*, as *Firmilianus* Bishop of *Cæsarea*, who had seen the Letter which *Stephen* had writ on that Subject to St. Cyprian, says positively; and, as it seems, one might also infer so much from some of St. Cyprian's own words; or at least, he had threatned to excommunicate him, if he renounced not his Opinion, and his Practice, as some will have it. Yet thus St. Cyprian spoke to the other Bishops of *Africa* his Collegues, in a Council, which he had caused to assemble at *Carthage*, to examin that point. *What remains to be done*, said he to them, *is, that we speak our minds each of us on that point, condemning no body, and excommunicating no person, for that Subject, tho' he were of another Opinion: For none of us establishes himself the Bishop of Bishops, and pretends not to constrain Tyrannically his Collegues to obey.* In which words *Baronius* has rightly observ'd, that he spoke of *Stephen*, tho' he nam'd him not.

St. Cyprian did love Peace and Union with so much Fervency, he had such a detestation for Schism, that he confounded the Schismatics with the most abominable *Hereticks*, such as were the *Marcionites*, and the *Valentinians*. He did not only equally reject the Baptism of the one and the other, but he equally excluded them from Heaven, teaching that a person who died in Schism, could pretend to no share of Salvation no more than the *Hereticks*: A cruel Opinion, and which ill agreed with that Charity with which this holy Martyr was possessed.

Cyprian Ep. 72. ad Jub.

Epist. Firmil. ad Cyp. inter Epist. Cyp. Epist. 74.

Conc. Cart. de Bapt. Heret. in Ep. Cyp.

Bar. Ann. An. 250. §. 42.

But if that extreme Rigor is not to be approved of, with which St. *Cyprian* did condemn all *Schismatics* to Everlasting Fire; we must not, however, refuse him those praises which he has deserved, by that strong Inclination which he has had for Unity. It is for that St. *Austin* praises him, in divers places of his Works, against the *Donatists*. He even maintains, that that Charity which St. *Cyprian* had shew'd remaining in Unity with those that were not of his Opinion, had blotted out that Spot which he had contracted by his Error, conserving the Baptism of *Heretics*, and of *Schismatics*.

It is true that St. *Austin* has stretch'd too far the Idea of Unity, as well as St. *Cyprian*, Excluding, like him, the *Schismatics* from Salvation. That hinders not, but those praises which he allow'd to St. *Cyprian*'s Inclination for Unity, were very justly ground'd; and that they were both right, to recommend it with great Care, and to look on *Schism* as a most horrid Crime.

St. *Irenaeus* had been before them of the same Mind, as he express'd it, on the account of the Difference which was risen in the Church, on the Day in which the Feast of *Easter* was to be Observ'd: The Church of *Asia* did Celebrate it the same Day that the *Jews* did, namely the Fourteenth of the *Moon*; and the greatest part of the other Churches did Observe it but on the *Sunday*, as we Observe it still to this Day. On this Point, which was but a Point of Discipline, *Victor* Bishop of *Rome* did carry himself to that Extremity, to Excommunicate all the Churches of *Asia*, and those of the Neighbouring Provinces, because they refus'd to Conform themselves to the Practice of that of *Rome*. But St. *Irenaeus* being advertis'd thereof, Writ to him in the Name of the Bishops of the *Gaules*, a Letter of which *Eusebius* has preserv'd us some Fragments, in which after having declar'd, that he was of the same Mind with *Victor*; he Condemn'd his Passion with much liberty, and strangely represented to him, that for questions of that Nature, the Bonds of Communion were not to be broken, nor the Peace of the Church to be disturb'd.

There were divers other Bishops which approv'd not of *Victor*'s Design no more than St. *Irenaeus* did, and who Writ to him after the same manner that he had done, to Exhort him to Peace and Unity, and to Charity, towards his Neighbour.

But that which proves better yet, the Unanimous Consent of the Primitive Church in that Opinion, that no Separation was to be on slight Differences; are those Examples which were alledg'd by St. *Irenaeus*, in that same Letter to *Victor*, which shew him, his Conduct was opposite to what had always been practis'd in the Church; he represented to him, that there was not only Difference on the account of the Day on which the Feast of *Easter* was to be kept, but even also on the Form of the Fast which was to be Observ'd before that Feast; that some Believ'd they were not to fast but one Day only; others, that they were to Fast Two Days; and some others, longer; that there were some also which Fast'd full Forty Hours together, comprehending the Hours of the Night and of the Day. That this Difference of Customs in the Observation of that Fast was not produc'd in their Days;

that it had long since began amongst their Ancestors: But that however Peace had always been Observ'd, as it was still Preserv'd, in that respect. After that he Nam'd to *Victor* divers of his Predecessors, whose Conducts had been effectually very different from his. He mention'd to him *Anicetus*, *Pius*, *Hygin*, *Telphorus*, and *Xistus*, all Bishops of *Rome*, who not keeping the Feast of *Easter*, on the same Day the Churches of *Asia* did, and even not permitting those who liv'd under their Ministry to Celebrate it that Day; did not however abstain from receiving into their Communion those Persons of those Churches which were *Rome*; tho' they did Celebrate that Feast after their own manner, and that this was to appear the more strange, because it was done in the midst of a People which follow'd another Custom. And he added, that *St. Polycarpus*, Bishop of *Smyrna* in *Asia*, being gone to *Rome*, in *Anicetus's* time, tho' those Two Bishops had betwixt them some slight Differences on other accounts, they presently gave one another mutually the Kiss of Peace; not much contesting on the point of the Day in which to Observe the *Easter* Feast; that they Communicated together; and that *Anicetus*, to Honour *Polycarpus*, would have this last to Consecrate the *Eucharist*. That in fine, they parted from one another in a perfect good Intelligence, preserving the Peace and the Communion of all the Church, notwithstanding the difference of their Customs.

Socrates, who relates the same History of the Dispute of *Victor* with the Churches of *Asia*, takes occasion from thence to speak of divers Customs and Ceremonies which were observ'd in certain Churches, and which were not observ'd in others, or that were variously observ'd, according to the diversity of place. He makes a long Enumeration of them, and observes that some of those particular Customs were of very Ancient standing. He says in general, that tho' the particular Churches had the same thoughts of God, they all had different Ceremonies, and that those who had one and the same Faith, had not the same Custom. *As* he adds, That in that great diversity of Customs, and of Ceremonies, none being able to alledge any Precept from Scripture to support theirs; it shew'd the Apostles had left to every one the liberty to follow that which they lik'd best.

We can then say with assurance, That all the primitive Church have been of that mind, that the Bonds of Communion were not to be broken, nor for indifferent Points, nor for Opinions, nor Practices, which destroy'd not the Essence of Christianity; and that above all, there has been always allow'd a great liberty as to Customs and Ceremonies, of which the Scriptures make no mention.

If that from the first Ages there have been some Bishops of *Rome* who have disturb'd the peace of the Church for such like things, it was doubtless because of the Ambition and Pride which were to be one day the two Columns of the Reign of Antichrist began to slide into their Chairs. But their Conduct was not approved of, and they were reprov'd for it by the Bishops their Collegues, as we have seen it in *Victor*.

And if there was some other particular Schism, as that which was in the Church of *Antioch*, on the account of *Melchius*, with whom the other Bishops would have no Communion, all Orthodox, and all Confessors as he was, because he had received the Ordination among

Socr. Hist. Eccl.
Lib. 5. Cap. 2.

Ib. l. 2. c. 44.

the *Arrians*. The reason was, that the Church at all times has had its defects, and its imperfections ; and that it has always been subject to those Disorders which might be caus'd by Men's particular Passions, or a mistaken Zeal, little enlightened. But after all, its general and common Practice has been to preserve the Peace and Union amongst its Members, notwithstanding the diversity of their Opinions, and of their Customs, in things which appertain'd not to the Essence of Christian Religion.

It is but since that time that Pride has got to its highest pitch, and that the Roman Church has put into her Head those pretended Privileges of its Infallibility, and Sovereign Authority ; that it has carried it self to that excess of Rashness, as to pronounce *Anathema* on all that never so little deviates from its Opinion, even in the less important things. Who could Read without Horror all those Vain *Anathema's*, which it has thrown forth in the Council of *Trent*, with as little Judgment as Charity ?

Let us leave, dearly beloved Brethren, that Proud Spouse of Antichrist, whose haughty Pride equals her Impurity ; let us leave her to spend in Vain her Thunders, without the least Discretion, and to throw them without distinction on those who Condemn her greatest Impieties, and on those that reject the least of her Ceremonies. As for us who are the Children of the Spouse of Christ, let us be Animated with his Spirit, which is a Spirit of Charity. If any one will Contest with us on things which touch not the Essence of Religion, let us

say with St. Paul, that *that is not our Custom, nor that of the Churches of God*. Let us bear in Charity with one anothers

Weaknesses, in imitation of Christ, *who quenches not the smocking Flax, nor breaks the bruised Reed*. Let us not Condemn any one lightly, and let us always Live with our Brethren in perfect Union.

Give us leave, dearly beloved Brethren, to Ask you here, Why you Act otherwise in this ? That Doctrin which we have Establish'd, is that of the Primitive Church, and of the most Holy of its Bishops, of St. Polycarpus, of St. Irenaeus, of St. Cyprian, of St. Austin, and of an infinite number of others which we name not. It is that of St. Paul, it is even that of Christ Jesus. Why do you not follow it then ? Why are you Separated one from another ? Why Live you not all in one and the same Communion, as Brethren in one Family ? Why have you not the same Churches, the same Assemblies, the same Pastors ? Is it that you Accuse one another of having Ruin'd, Christian Truth, or Christian Piety ? Is it that you mutually look on one another as Hereticks, or Idolaters ? God defend us from Taxing you with such thoughts.

You have all one and the same Faith, the same Sacraments, the same Hope, and the same Object of your Worship. You all acknowledg the same God for Father, and the same Christ Jesus for your Saviour. You have all been Baptized with the same Baptism, and you all partake of the same Eucharist. You all Aspire to the same Heavenly Inheritance. You all Worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one only true God Sovereignly Adorable ; and you adore but him alone. You have all equally Renounc'd Popery ; you all Condemn its Errors ; you all Abominate its Impieties ; and you have all the same Horror for his Tyranny.

You

• **You both retain Truth and Piety**, and your Separation therefore cannot but be sinful. If there is any thing wanting to you, *our Dearly Beloved Brethren*, it is **Charity**, a mutual **Support**, and a **Brotherly Union**. Was it not for want of **Charity**, that the Sacred Bonds of Communion have been broken, on the account of a Form of Ecclesiastical Government, of Vestures and Ornaments, of Customs and Ceremonies, which cannot be consider'd by such as judge with equity of things, not necessary, nor as impious; in a word, on the account of the exterior part of Religion, which absolutely depends on Discipline? Were you for that to separate, to make particular Assemblies, to set up Altar against Altar, to rend in pieces not Christ his Coat, but his dear Spouse, his own Body?

We seek not here which of the two Parties has given occasion for this Separation, and which consequently is the most guilty: But we will tell you, with Freedom, *Dearly Beloved Brethren*, it is almost impossible but that there has been some defect on both sides. Those who separate themselves for indifferent things, or which at least are agreeing with the Ground of Religion, doubtless do violate Charity; and those who suffer such a Separation, rather than to renounce those same indifferent things, but are, however, scandalous to their Brethren, cannot deny but that they wrong it also. We can boldly say, that *St. Paul* has not done either the one or the other. He who made himself all things to all; and who protested, that if flesh offended his brother, he would never eat flesh, for fear of offending him, 1 Cor. ix. 22. *ib.* viii. 13.

We mention not those Persecutions which you have suffer'd of one another, they are Objects fit to be Bury'd in Eternal Oblivion, and that you ought to endeavour to blot out of your Memories. Let us leave what is pass'd, and let us think of Repairing by a Conduct quite different of that which we have hitherto kept, those Faults which we have committed, till this present.

We Conjure you, *Dearly Beloved Brethren*, by the Bowels of Compassions of God's Mercy, and by the Blood of Christ Jesus, to Reunite your selves at last in one Communion; seeing that notwithstanding your Separation, you are still United in one Faith, and in one Worship. Banish from amongst you the Words of *Conformists*, and of *Non-Conformists*; of *Episcopals*, and of *Presbyterians*. Cause those Odious Names to be forgotten, which are the Witnesses of your Schism; and Aspire all to attain and deserve the Glorious Name of Christians by an Union and Charity worthy the true Disciples of Christ Jesus.

Besides the General Motives which are drawn even from the very Foundation of Christianity, and from the Nature of the Church, and which we have touch'd upon in this Letter, and in the precedent; there are divers particular Reasons which ought powerfully to lead you to Reunion. They shall be, if God pleases, the Business of a Third Letter, which we propose to Write in some few Days.

Mean time we Wish to you that Grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are always with all our Hearts, Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,

Your most Humble and most Obedient Servants, and

most Affectionate Brothers, in Christ Jesus, N. N.

The THIRD LETTER to the same.

Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,

VVE shall not produce to you all the particulars which ought to oblige you to Reunite in one Communion, we shall only mention the chiefest of them, and of greatest force.

Shall it be necessary to tell you, That your Division has been ready to Ruin both Parties of you? You know this already. Have you not seen your selves on the very brink of Destruction? What great progress had Popery already done amongst you? You have seen that dangerous Enemy, who seemed not long since wholly suppress'd in *England*, begin to raise up his Head again; come out of that obscurity in which he had been lurking, attack you boldly, and promise to himself nothing less than an absolute Victory; and suddenly to raise his Trophies on the Ruins of your Religion, and all your Liberties.

An *English* Embassador was already Resident at *Rome*, and a Pope's Nuncio in *England*: A Jesuit was crept into the King's Privy-Council, who was the great Wheel of all the Actions of the Court. Ye were already divested of all your Employments and Offices, to adorn the Papists with them: And in their Hands were deposited, the Interests of the State, the Concerns of Religion, and all your particular Affairs; your Wealth, your Liberty, your Honour, and even your Lives. The Parliament was no more but a shadow. The Arch-Bishops, Bishops, and Inferior Clergy, could no longer do their Duties in safety: Either a Suspension, or a Prison, was the Reward of those who would be true to Christ. Mass was openly said in *London*, Chappels, Churches, and Monasteries, were were publickly Erected, where there resorted whole Swarms of Priests and Monks of all sorts. Declarations were Publish'd for the Subversion of your most Solemn and Sacred Laws, and to entirely Establish the *Roman* Religion. In short, if things had gone a little longer in the same Road, you might have bid farewell to *England's* Liberty, and to the Protestant Religion in that Kingdom.

Was not all that the fruit of your Division? Had your Enemies ever thought to attempt such things, if they had seen you firmly United? Durst they have undertaken it, though they had had such thoughts? But seeing you divided as you were, they imagin'd that it was easie to suppress you, and that they might attempt all things unpunish'd.

To that purpose they themselves did cast Oil into the Fire, which was but too much kindled already. Fully persuaded of this Oracle of Christ, That every Kingdom divided against it self is brought to nought, and every City or House divided against it self shall not stand, *Matth. xii. 25.* They fomented your Divisions with all their might, to get the means of destroying you more certainly, and with more ease.

What Springs did they not set in motion, what Arts did they not employ, to increase your Animosities? Sometimes they Courted the Bishops, and sometimes the Presbyterians, they flatter'd their Passions by turns. Sometimes they stir'd up the

the Bishops Zeal to the Conformity of the Publick Worship; and sometimes they inflam'd the Presbyterians Desires for Liberty of Conscience. They laid Bates for all, to insensibly engage them in the Court's Designs. Sometimes they urg'd on the Bishops to Persecute the Presbyterians; and sometimes again, they manag'd the tormented Minds of the Presbyterians in opposition to the Bishops. In a word, they omitted nothing to animate you more and more one against another, and to make you all concur to their own destruction.

Those Arts had succeeded so well with them, that they could undertake all things without danger; in truth they did attempt all, and under the shelter of your Divisions their Enterprizes had almost always their wish'd for success.

Already, from all parts, *England* was look'd upon as a Kingdom deprived of its Liberty, and not only submitted to an Arbitrary Power, and to an Absolute Authority, that is, to all the Humours of the King, and of his Council, but to the Tyranny of Popery also. All *Europe* was in a Maze at it. *Rome* and its Abettors were already preparing their solemn Rejoicing. The Reformed Churches did tremble at it, and beholding you on the Edg of the Precipice, they all fear'd being involv'd in your Ruin.

Is not this, our Dearly Beloved Brethren, a powerful Motive to lead you to Reunion and Peace? Your Divisions have been on the point of Destroying you. Ought you not then to Reunite your selves, for fear of falling once again in the like dangers?

When a Kingdom is divided into divers Factions, and that it tears it self in pieces with its own Hands, there is nothing more easie than to overcome it. It is the same with the Church while it is divided into Schism, her Enemies easily Triumph over her Weakness. And God on his part, to punish her for having oppress'd Charity, does abandon her to the Cruelty of her Enemies, and permit them to Rife her. The Ancient Churches of *Africa* are Remarkable Example of this. After the Schism of the *Donatists* had exerciz'd its Furies against them, during divers Ages, God at last deliver'd *Vist. Vist. deper* up that Country to the *Vandals*, a Cruel and Barbarous Nation. *Affie.* infected with *Arrianism*, and permitted, that under their Cruelties, those poor Churches did suffer the most horrid Persecution until which the Churches had ever been expos'd.

God has not dealt so with you, our Dearly Belov'd Brethren. He has not wholly abandon'd you to the Fury of Popery: But without laying on the Blow he has been satisfied only to shew you the Rods, to let you see what you may fear from his Anger if you continue to Vex him by your Divisions. Flatter not yourselves, *It is a Dreadful Thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God*, Heb x. 31. And Christ tells you this Day, as he formerly said to the Church at *Ephesus*, *have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Charity. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repeat and do the first Works, or else I will come against thee shortly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of its place, except thou amend*, Revel. xi. 45. Cast your Eyes on our Wasted Churches of *France*, see with what severity the Lord has treated them. They were not divided with Schism: Yet because they had abus'd Charity in divers other ways, and that they were not Converted at his Word, he has Visited them in his Just Vengeance, *ha*

has taken from them his precious Candlestick; he has depriv'd them from the Ministry of his Word, he has reduced them to the extreamest Desolation. Fear, lest he should treat you with the same Rigour he has treated us; if you remain Impenitent as we were. You know that he spared not your Fathers, under the Reign of *Mary*: Have a Care lest he Punish you as he did them. He is ever infinitely Just: And we cannot shelter our selves from his Justice but by a serious Conversion.

To the Consideration of his Justice, join that of his Mercy. Reunite your selves, Dearly Beloved Brethren, to shew him your Gratitude for that Miraculous Deliverance which he has lately granted you, at the same time that you could not but think your selves lost, past all Redemption.

Represent to your selves *England* in the Condition she was but some Months since. She beheld on the Throne a Popish King, a great Zealot, who entirely abandon'd himself to the Will of a furious Jesuit, and of an Imprudent Council, both Bigot, and ill designing; on the other Hand, an Ambitious King, who impatiently bore with the Just Limits the Laws set to his Authority; a Haughty King, Fearless, and Undertaking, who would be Obey'd in all things, and who found nothing difficult. It saw terrible Breaches made in its Laws, which are the Bulwarks of its Liberty and Religion. It did see the Parliamentary Authority Annul'd, the Liberty of the Clergy oppress'd, the People divested of their Privileges. It did see Right and Justice over-turn'd in a Thousand ways, the Foundation of the Protestant Religion undermin'd, and the *Roman* Religion re-establish'd.

It beheld all this, and was forc'd to bear it. Of which side soever it cast its Eyes, it discover'd nothing from whence it could expect Relief, nothing but what foretold to it the last of Evils. On the one side Popery did grow Daily more fierce, and more dreadful, and puff'd up with those progresses which it had made of late, it endeavour'd Daily to go on. After it had Ruin'd the Reformed Churches of *France*, and of the Vallies of *Piemont*; it labour'd incessantly to Ruin the Reformation of all *Europe*. On the other side the Protestant Princes and States were not sufficiently United, and some of them had peradventure sufficiency of Zeal to undertake to resist those Attempts. And having seen the French Churches Perish before their Eyes, without making one Motion towards their preservation; it is probable, that they would let those of *England* perish also.

If in this Extremity in which *England* sees it self Reduc'd, it carries its thought to the future; if turning them towards the Princes and Princesses of the Royal blood, flatters it self with the hopes, that a Change of Reign may produce some change in the Government, and in the Affairs; that budding Hope will soon be lasted. To go on with the Tragedy, there is brought on the Stage, by the means of divers Machines, a Prince of *Wales*, who tho' but a Child, does nevertheless Threaten it with an Eternal Slavery.

But who would have thought, that at the same Moment *England* was in that deplorable Condition, it touch'd with its Fingers end the very instant of its Deliverance. Let us Worship, Dearly Beloved Brethren, with a profound Humility, that Wise Providence, which needs but to blow on the designs of Men, to

Reduce them to Smoak; and which by a Thousand concealed Springs always conducts the Events to that very end, which it has propos'd; and which turns what it pleases to the good and advantage of its Church, the Direful Plots of its Enemies. Can it be doubted, but that this is the Finger of God? A Blow of Adorable Hand? *Exod. viii. 19.* Let us study well his Conduct, let us consider it with Attention, and we shall perceive, that long since his Providence had prepar'd these things to bring them to that point in which we see them.

Of the Generous Blood of *Nassau*, and of the Blood Royal of *England*, frames a Prince, who no sooner begins to appear in the World, but he draws him the Eyes and Admiration of all the Earth. He abundantly Enriches him with all the Virtues which make up a Christian, and an Hero. He places him in sight of all his Enemies at the Head of a Powerful Republick: But he places him there, at such a time, when that Republick is Harass'd with a War, almost overcome by the Arms of a potent Stranger; and he so Orders things that in a short time it owes to him its Safety and Deliverance. He gives him a Wife a Princess Worthy of him; a Princess who is one Day to succeed, both to the Crown of *England*; and to those of *Scotland* and *Ireland*.

England finding itself oppress'd, in the manner we have mention'd, do's cast her eyes on that great Prince and Princess, whomake up all its consolation and its hope. They both concern themselves deeply in her Afflictions, especially in the Oppression under which they see the Protestant Religion, and they would gladly apply some Remedy to it. But the Consideration which they have for a King, to whom the Princess owes her Life, retains them; and causes that they are contented to represent to his Majesty, in a most respectful manner, the just Sorrow they have for what pass'd in *England*; and to make him some Propositions, tending to the Re-establishment of Quiet in his Kingdoms.

God permits that their Propositions are not so much as heard, and they are a little consider'd, that to exclude them from the Succession, a pretended Prince of *Wales* is set up as an Heir to the Three Crowns.

That last Attempt, which Popery consider'd as the chief Master-piece of its policy and prudence, and which, in effect, seem'd as if it would establish and confirm it in *England*, and there make it for ever triumph over the Protestant Religion, becomes, by a Miracle of Providence, the Rock against which all its Plots and Designs are dash'd in pieces.

The Prince perceiving they no longer kept any Measures, thinks himself oblig'd to observe none of his side. He sees that at the same time Three Kingdoms are taken from the Illustrious Princess, his Spouse; they make an end of oppressing, beyond all hopes, the Peoples Liberty, and the Protestant Religion. The Respect which he preserv'd till then for the King, yields at last to such great Considerations, that he resolves to run where Honour and Conscience call him. He frames a Design to go and relieve *England*; and that Commonwealth, which we have mention'd, desirous to acknowledge, in some measure, those Obligations it owes him, lends him Ships and Forces to execute a Project so worthy his great Soul.

God, who had design'd him for so great and glorious an Enterprize, that he might succeed in it with more Ease, diverts those Obstacles which might oppos

m. The King of *England* could expect no assistance but from the King of *France*, whose two Kings were strictly united in their Interest, they were mutually engag'd by a Treaty to act in Concert, to wholly extinguish the Protestant Religion in *Europe*; and, on the other hand, *Lewis XIV.* was no less an Enemy to the Prince, than a Friend to the King of *England*. But *France* having torn its own Bowels, having extremely weakned itself, by those Cruelties which it had exercis'd against the Reformed Religion, is not now so formidable as formerly. Its Neighbours no longer fear it, being resolv'd not to bear the Insultations which it continually made over them, they are united together for their common defence. It creates to itself Enemies all over the Earth. On the one side, a small Republick has a Watch over its Fleet, which might have been employ'd in opposing the Princes Designs; in lieu of which, it spends itself on the Coasts of *Africa*. On the other, an Elector of the Empire dyes, to draw upon its head all *Europe*. The Chapter, who has Right to name a Successor, is divided in the Election. Two Princes concur to the Electorship: The one is protected by the *French* King, the other by the Emperor, and the Pope. This causes some Disturbances, there are provocations on each side, Manifestos are published; at last it proceeds to an open Rupture, which sufficiently busies *France*, nor to permit it to meddle with the Affairs of *England*.

Mean time, this Prince Embarks himself at the head of a powerful Fleet, he happily arrives in *England*, he is there received with a thousand Acclamations, and many Demonstrations of Joy. The Lords, the Magistrates, the Nobility, and the People, behold him all as their Deliverer, and they themselves lay open to him the Gates of Cities; instantly whole Counties declar'd for him. His Army continually increased, as fast as the King's Army wasted; and the King perceiving himself abandon'd by every Body, is forc'd to yield, and to cause the Convocation of a Free Parliament to be publish'd; and, not long after, absents himself, and seeks for a Retreat in *France*. Finally, the Heavens are so propitious to the Prince, that he executes his Enterprize with such an Ease, as it may be never had in Example.

Where are those prophane persons that dare to deny Providence? Can they be so blind, as not to see it act in this important Occasion?

Blessed be for ever the Almighty God, for having watch'd for you during your sleep; for having sav'd you, when all things seem'd to conspire your Ruin! What acknowledgments ought you to have, and to express to him for it! What thanksgiving ought you to render him! With what Zeal ought you to publish these wonderful Things which he has done for your Deliverance! With what Ardency, with what Devotion ought you to require of him, that he would himself finish that great Work which he has so happily began!

But to give him yet greater and more sensible marks of your just Acknowledgments, and oblige him to fix more and more in *England*, the Authority of the Laws, the Quiet and Liberty of the People, and the Protestant Religion; it is necessary, Dearly Beloved Brethren, that you hereafter avoid to displease and offend him; and that by your Conversation, you cause him to let fall from his hands those Rods which he had already taken up to chastise you. Turn to him therefore with all your hearts, and your Schism being, doubtless, one of those
which

which had the most contributed to the kindling of his Anger against you, reunite your Selves all together, and cause the external peace which you already begin to enjoy by his infinite mercy, to be accompanied with the inward peace of your Church. Thus did the *Eastern Churches* under the Emperor *Gallus*. They were divided by the Schism of the *Novatians*, and that Division continu'd so long as they were persecuted; but no sooner was the persecution ended, that they all reunited one with another, as we learn it by a Letter from *Denis Bishop of Alexandria*. Do the same at this present, while the Parliament shall labour in the Re-establishment of the Laws, of Justice, and of good Order in the State; labour all unaimously to re-establish the peace of the Sanctuary, and never grow weary, till you have effectually perform'd it. Give that Joy to the Church, which has groaned long since, to see itself torn by so many Schisms, and which cannot receive a greater Consolation in the midst of the persecution which she suffers from her Enemies, than to see all her Children reunited together in the Sacred Bonds of Charity and Peace. Your Reunion will be, perhaps, an Example, which God may make use to dispose all the Protestants in *Europe* to unite all in one Body, and in one Communion. What an happiness would it not be, if we could see not only in *England*, the *Presbyterians* reunited with the Bishops, but *Germany* also, the *Lutherans* join'd to the Reformed; all the Protestants, in a word reunited one with another, making no longer but one flock, as they have all but one Shepherd. Then we might say with confidence, that God were entirely appeased with his Church, and that he were preparing himself to make her triumph over all her Enemies. May the Heavens let us see such happy days! But if the time of the general Peace of the Church is not yet come, may the God of Peace give in the mean-time that Peace to the Church of *England*; and after he has given it, may he preserve it to her throughout all Ages to the last Posterity. We are, with all our heart, Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,

A—Jan. 8.
1689.

Your most humble and most obedient Servants,
And most affectionate Brothers in Christ Jesus, N. N.

The Fifth Letter to the Presbyterians of ENGLAND.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

THOUGH in the Three Letters which we have writ to the Protestants of *England* in general, We have alledged divers Reasons, which appear'd to us sufficiently strong, to bring you all to a Reunion, We yet have thought it would not be in vain to exhort you to it in particular.

That which we have to say, ought not to be suspected by you, in those Differences which you have with the Bishops, we wholly side with you; and that Discipline under which we live in *France*, is precisely the same which you would have establish'd in *England*. There was among us neither Archbishops, nor Bishops. There was no Subordination, nor Supremacy, amongst our Pastors; they all possess the same Ministry, in a perfect Equality. Their Habits were plain and modest, it was so with the publick Services of our Churches; there cannot be observ'd a greater Plainness, than that we observ'd in it. We had no magnificent Churches, Ornaments, nor Ceremonies. There could be nothing observ'd in our Assemblies of Piety, which relish'd of the vain Pomp of Popery: And we can say with Confidence, that either in our Sermons, in our Prayers, or in our ordinary Psalms: in the Administration of the Sacraments, or of Fasts, We had not retain'd the least shadow of *Roman Superstition*. This was not only our Practice, but we believe that such a Practice is most worthy of the plainness of the Gospel.

That Conformity which is betwixt your Sentiments and ours, gives us to hope, Dearly Beloved

brethren, that you will receive with favourable Disposition; those Advices which we have to communicate to you, or, at least, that you will not take them in ill part; and, in this thought, we will give you our Opinions with a Brotherly Freedom.

We shall first Observe in general, that there is a real Schism in *England*. You have not there one with another under the same Ministry. You Assemble not in the same Churches, You partake not of the same Table; in a Word, you entertain not amongst you that Communion of the Saints, which should most strictly bind together all the Members of Christ Jesus's Body.

If you Liv'd in different Kingdoms, if you did not acknowledg the same Laws, or the same Sovereigns, it would not be strange you had not the same Ministry, or the same Ceremonies? And provided that according to occasions, you receiv'd one another Mutually to each others Communion; the difference of your Customs would not render you guilty of Schism. Thus did the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches formerly do, they kept a Communion one with another, notwithstanding their vast distance of place, and difference of Customs. Thus the *English* Church, and the Reformed Churches of *France*, had Communion also with another, before the Ruin of this last. They had neither the Ecclesiastick Government, nor the same Ceremonies: Yet the *French* Protestants which were in *England* were receiv'd without any difficulty to the Communion of the *English* Church, and they made no Scruple on their part to Communicate with it. And the Members of the *English* Church which were in *France* were there receiv'd so to the Communion of the Reformed Churches, and they Scrupled not to communicate with them.

But it is not the same between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterians. We all Live in the same Kingdom, in the same Cities, and sometimes in the same Houses, you all own the Sovereign Authority, the same Magistrates, the same Laws: In a Word, ye are United together by all the Ties of the Civil Society; yet you Form Two distinct Bodies, in regard of Religion; and if you say not to each other expressly *Anathema*, yet you have no Communion together. What can be call'd a Schism if that is not one?

We pretend not to step back to the Spring of this Schism, to discover which of the Two Churches, either the Episcopal, or the Presbyterian, is guilty. The business is not to seek after the Sword, or the Arm that made the Wound, but to find out a Remedy, and to Cure it.

All *England* might be Reduc'd into One Communion by Three different Means. The First would be, That the Bishops would Divest themselves of their Dignities, and make themselves equal to the other Ministers; and that the Episcopal Church Renounc'd all that Exterior Shew which offends the Presbyterians, and that they wholly Conform'd to their Discipline. The Second, That the Presbyterian Church should Range it self under the Episcopal, and receive all the Customs and Ceremonies of the Episcopal Church, without any alteration. And the last, That both the Churches should Relinquish something each of their part, and draw near to one another. We must now Examine, by which of these three ways we must endeavor to attain to a Reunion.

As to the First, There is no likelihood that it should be follow'd; and we shall not forbear to tell you, Our Dearly Beloved Brethren, that you could not be Reasonable, should you Require that the Episcopal Church

should wholly conform to the practice of the Presbyterians. Consider that the Episcopal Church has on her side Possession and the Laws; of one side she is generally received in all the Countreys, and in all the Cities of *England*, it possesses there all the Churches and all the Pulpits; and on the other it is not only the predominant Church, but the only established Church, and supported by the authority of the Laws. By what right could you pretend to disturb it in its possession? or to require, that to give you satisfaction, she should renounce freely all those Priviledges which she enjoys under so lawful an Authority? You ought to rest satisfied, that on the contrary, she has power to maintain her self in that possession in which she is, and which is authorized by the solemn Laws of the Kingdom.

But that you should not think we allow a too great authority to Possession and to the Laws over Religion, it is necessary we should clear to you our conceptions on that point.

First, we confess that as to the ground of Religion, neither Possession nor Laws are any thing to it, and that they can give no Right or Prerogatives to an Heretick or Idolatrous Church to remain in its Heresy or Idolatry. The Possession protects neither Error nor Crime, and the Humane Laws can no more authorize what the Divine Laws forbid. In vain did the *Roman Church* alledge her Possession to the Reformers; that Possession did not authorize her Errors nor her Superstitions; and in vain it is, that the Princes of her Communion pretend to authorize their Religion by their Laws: all those Laws have no force against those Divine Laws which condemn it. If therefore the Episcopal Church was Heretical or Idolatrous, she might alledge as long as she pleas'd the Possession and the Laws, she should not for that be the less obliged to renounce her errors or her impieties.

Secondly, as to what regards the external Discipline of the Church, we farther own two things; the one, that it can receive divers alterations, according to the variety of times, of places, and of occurrences: The other, that it belongs to the Church itself to make the regulation, rather than to the Sovereigns, in quality of Sovereigns.

But after this concession which we have made you, most on your part, Dearly beloved Brethren, agree with us in these following points.

The First is, that nothing is to be alter'd lightly in an already established Religion, not even in regard of the exterior; though the Regularities of Discipline are not perpetual, one ought not to touch them without great necessity. Such alterations may scandalize weak consciences; they are likewise subject to divers other inconveniences, at least when they cannot be made without noise.

The Second is, that one ought to avoid above all, as much as possible, to make any alteration in the outward part of Religion, when once it is authorized by Law; though it properly belongs to the Church rather than to the Sovereigns to regulate the Discipline, and the out-side of Religion, as we have already said, it is sometimes necessary, that the Sovereigns should meddle in it: and the Churches ought to have so much respect for those

Powers to whom it has pleased God to subject it, as to religiously submit to their Laws, so long as they offend not the conscience, and that they are not contrary to this general precept of the Apostle, *That all things be done decently and with order*, 1 Cor. 12. 40.

The Third point is, that when the Sovereigns and the Subjects profess equally the true Religion, the Sovereigns have yet more right to meddle with the Regulation of the Discipline, than when they are of an other Religion than that of their Subjects. Then as they make the most considerable part of the Church, which God has gathered in their Kingdoms, their will and pleasure is highly to be regarded in such things as conserve the external part of Religion; and those Laws which they give in that respect, ought to be exactly observed.

In fine, it cannot be disputed to Sovereigns the Power of making such Laws as regulate the exterior part of Religion. When the Sovereign Authority, and the Legislative Power are either wholly, or in part in the hands of the People, then all the People are the more oblig'd to submit to those Laws, because they have made them themselves, or at least have had some share in the making of them. In this last case, the Laws are not only Ordinances of Sovereigns; they may be considered as Regulations of the Church also, or as Articles of a Confederation in which all the People are concern'd.

You easily judge our dearly beloved Brethren, that here we have *England* in view; every body knows that in effect, the People have a share in the Government: The Sovereign Authority, and the Legislative Power, resides there in three different subjects, namely, in the King, and in the Two Houses of Parliament; the one of which is composed of the Lords and Peers of the Realm, which are the principal Members of the State; and the other of the Deputies of all the People. It is then a Government in which Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy are mixed together, and the Laws are established in it, by the King, by the Lords, and the Commons jointly.

From all these Propositions these two conclusions are to be drawn; the First, that though Possession is not always a good Title in matters of Religion, it is so in the present case. There is no necessity of altering the whole face of the Church of *England*; that could not be done neither without great noise, and above all, it would be very dangerous to touch to the Ecclesiastical Government. The Second, that the Laws of *England* have a very lawful authority over the out-side of Religion, and that consequently you are not in right to require of the Bishops, that they should bring any alteration to a Government and Service that is authorised by its own Laws.

It would doubtless be more just, Dearly beloved Brethren, to follow the second way of re-union; that which we have observ'd on the first, ought to convince all rational Persons of it. We must say of the *Presbyterian* Church quite the contrary of what we have said of the *Episcopal*; the *Presbyterian* Church can alledge no Laws nor Possession; it is separated from that other Church, which has on its side both the Laws and Possession: and you know but too well, that the Laws, far from being favourable to your Church,

Church, are formally opposite to it, and that it cannot establish it self without violating them. Is she not then obliged to joyn her self to the Episcopal Church as a Member to the Body from which it has been separated, as a branch to the Body of the Tree whence it was torn off?

There are but three things that could be capable to justify your separation, if you could reproach either of them to the Bishops, and to their Church; the one would be Heresy in their Principles, the other Impiety in Worship, and the last Tyranny in Government.

As to Heresy and Impiety, we have sufficiently shew'd in our general Letters, that the one and the other give just causes of Separation; and we have confess'd to you heretofore, that if the Episcopal Church was guilty of that, neither Possession nor the Laws would give it right to maintain itself in its Errors nor in its false Worship, and that on the contrary she should be obliged to renounce them.

We will then be satisfied to say in a word, that if she was effectually either Heretical or Idolatrous and Impious, and that she should refuse to reform, though she had on her side Possession and the Laws, you could lawfully remain separate from her Communion: in such a case, you would cleave to the stock of the Tree, and she would be but a broken Bough torn from it.

Tyranny can also give occasion of a lawful separation. If there was a Church which should retain all the essence of Christianity, either in the Faith or in the Worship, that should excommunicate the other Churches for slight differences betwixt them, and that would not receive to its Communion but those that would subscribe to certain Doctrins that were either false, or of small importance, and to be contested; one might doubtless remain most justly separated from such a Church: It would be she that would separate her self from the body, which she would pretend to separate others from.

That was Firmilianus's opinion, as he express'd it to St. Cyprian in a Letter which he wrote to him, on the difference which this last had with Stephen Bishop of Rome: *You have retracted your selves from the Communion, deceive not your selves, said he in that Letter, addressing himself to Stephen; for added he, he is really a Schismatick who breaks the Unity of the Church. Thus while you imagine you can separate others from you, you have alone separated your selves from all.*

Epist. Firm.
ap. Cyp. E-
pisc. 74.

It was also in the same Spirit that St. Augustine said to Crasconius the Donatist, That if there were any Persons found should teach in publick Writings, that the action of the Traditors was to be imitated, that *should suffer no body in their Communion, but such as would approve of those Writings, they would separate themselves from the Unity of the Church.*

Aug. Cont.
Crasc. lib.
111. cap 56.

According to this principle, if the Bishops should anathematise you, or if they would not admit you to their Communion, but on condition that you should say as some of them do, that *Episcopacy is of Divine Right*: It would be they that would separate from you, and that would properly be the Schismaticks.

You would remain lawfully separated from the Bishops, were they guilty of Heresy in their Doctrins, of Idolatry in their Worship, or of Tyranny in their Government. But can you, our dearly beloved Brethren, accuse them of any such thing? Have they perverted the Fundamental truths of Religion? Have they destroyed the Christian Piety by a Prophane and Impious Worship? Do they exercise a Tyrannical Authority in the Church? Do they Fulminate unjust Anathema's against you? Do they exact from you any Subscriptions to some Doctrins against your Consciences? Is it but on that condition that they will receive you to their Communion? If so, remain separate from them and their Church in good time; they have retrench'd themselves, and they are the right Schismatics: Neither Possession nor the Laws oblige you to hold Communion with them. But if you cannot make them any such reproach with the least appearance of Reason, if that their Faith is pure, and their Worship Evangelical; if they offer to you their Communion without exacting any thing from you, that can hurt your Conscience; if they demand nothing else of you but that you should submit to their Ministry, and that you should conform to their Ceremonies and Customs, what is it that can hinder you from reuniting with them?

You will say peradventure, that Episcopacy considered in itself, and the Ceremonies which are observed in the Episcopal Church, are things which you could not exteriorly receive, without offending your Conscience, because your heart cannot give its consent to it, no more than to that Doctrin, That Episcopacy is of Divine Right. Those are, you will add but remnants of Popery, unworthy the true Religion of Christ, and incompatible with the Purity and Simplicity of his Gospel.

But in the First place, there is a great difference in approving outwardly a Doctrin which one condemns in the heart, and in complying to some Practice of which one wholly approves not. The first is never allow'd of; that would be to betray ones own Conscience, and to render one self guilty of Hypocrisy, thus to approve without, what one condemns within. The Second is not only permitted in some certain occasions, it is an indispensable duty. We have shew'd in our general Letters, that not to break the Bond of Unity, and not to scandalize our Brethren, we are oblig'd to bear with their weakness, and to suit our selves to their practices, as Superstitious as they may be sometimes.

Secondly, if you had that thought That Episcopacy and the Episcopal Ceremonies of their Church, were incompatible with the true Religion, for that only reason, that they were Reliques of Popery; permit us to say, dearly beloved Brethren, that you would be highly deceived. Look on all that outside, if you please, of the *English* Church, that you approve not of, as a remnant of the furniture of the Prostitute *Babylon*; we shall freely joyn with you in it: but take notice at the same time, that they are Ornaments that are not wholly unworthy of the chaste Spouse of Christ. Had not the Church imploy'd them before the coming of Antichrist? And why then might she not make use of them still at this time? If for example, Episcopacy is no Apostolick institu-

institution, as we are perswaded it is not, can it be denyed but that it is at least very antient? Was it not established in *St. Austins*'s days? and in those of *St. Chrysostom*, of *St. Athanasius*, of *St. Ambrose*, of *St. Cyprian*, &c. Was it not established in such Ages, in which the Church had not yet lost its Purity, even in those Ages that were nearest to the Apostles?

It is certain that Episcopacy has been as a Staff by which Tyranny has raised itself in the Church. But withal, it being deprived of all which Popery had added of Tyrannick and Impure, as it has been in *England*, may it not then be us'd very advantageously, though the Church of *Rome* has made use of it?

We must reason after the same manner about the Ceremonies, and all the other Customs observ'd in the Church of *England*, even of those that may have been hatch'd in the bosom of the Church of *Rome*; they should not be cast away for that only reason, that the Church of *Rome* has made use of them: Could not a good use be made of that which she has employ'd about her Superstitions? much after the same manner that *Moses* employed the Gold of *Egypt*, to the construction and ornament of the Tabernacle. Know you not that, *Unto the Pure all things are pure*; whereas, *unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure*, as says *St. Paul*? Tit. i. 15.

In a word, if the Christian Religion could not bare with Episcopacy, nor with the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, because the Papists had once made use of them, or did still use them at present; We should forbear the use of Pulpits, of Churches, and of Assemblies; in fine, of all that we have in common with the Church of *Rome*. That was *St. Cyprian*'s reasoning, when it was alledged to him, that *Novatianus* rebaptized as well as he did; *What Reason is that*, said that Holy Bishop, *that because Novatianus has the confidence to rebaptize, we ought not to do so? We must* Cyp. Epist. 72. ad Jub. *also then decline our Pulpit, because Novatianus Usurps the honour of the Sacerdotal Seat: And because he strives to erect an Altar, and to offer Sacrifices, we must forsake the Altar and the Sacrifices, for fear it should be thought we imitated him.*

It must be concluded from all we have said hitherto, Dearly beloved Brethren, that in Rigour the Bishops should not be obliged to change any thing in their Discipline, either as to the Ministry, or as to the Ceremonies and the Publick Service to reunite to us; and that on the contrary you should be obliged to reunite to the Episcopal Church, such as it is, and without any alterations made to it. But we acknowledge, that if the Bishops did stand to that, and that they would not yield something for the sake of Peace; such a Proceeding would suit very ill with Charity, which will have us to bear with one another, and that we even Sacrifice to the Peace of the Church, and to the Edification of our Brethren, that freedom which the Gospel affords us.

We then believe, that it must be by the third way, that you are to reunite one with another, that is, by releasing something on both sides by a mutual condescension, ye ought to draw near to one another; so that you may all live in one Communion.

That which makes us hope, that you may reunite by this last means, is that we know that the Bishops are disposed to follow it ; they are in a design to sacrifice to an Union some of their Opinions and Customs, and even to re-trench of their Publick Service, all that shall be thought would scandalize weak Consciences.

On your part, our Dearly beloved Brethren, be ye possess'd with a Spirit of Charity and Peace, and be not too difficult to please ; receive without scruple such Customs and Ceremonies, which alter not the ground of Religion, and of which a good use may be made ; and make no difficulty to reunite your selves with the Bishops, and to submit your selves to their Ministry.

When will you do it, if not at this time, that the *English* Clergy is filled with so great a number of Prelates, of so great merits ? of Prelates equally illustrious by their Learning and by their Virtue, whose Piety, Zeal and Charity cannot be too much prais'd : in a word, of Prelates worthy of the time of the Apostles.

You formerly suspected them of not being good Protestants, and of favouring Popery ; that was at least the pretence by which some of you us'd to justify your Separation. What an injustice was that ? Have you seen, when Popery was effectually to be introduced in *England*, that they made the least step to favour that design ? Have you perceiv'd that they gave an helping hand by a base complaisancy ? Have you not seen them on the contrary, to oppose it with an Apostolick Vigour and Zeal, without any reserve for the King, nor regard to their own Liberties, nor to all their particular Interests ? Now therefore that those unjust Suspitions which you had conceiv'd against them, ought to be entirely blotted out of your minds ; reunite your selves with them, and refuse no longer to acknowledge them for your Ministers.

We have not forgot, that under the Reign of *Charles* the Second, they treated you with great severity ; that is, what you can reproach to them with great justice ; and we doubt not but that some resentments of it still remain in your hearts. We can on this account tell you in Conscience, Dearly beloved Brethren, that we have always shar'd much in your troubles, and that we have beheld with a sensible sorrow all those Persecutions which you have suffered from the Episcopal Church. But you ought to impute those Persecutions, either to the arts of a Court, which had already a great tendency for Popery ; or to an excessive Zeal which the Bishops had for Unity, rather than to any sentiments of aversion or of hatred, which they had against you. And however, ought we not to forget the Injuries we have receiv'd from our Brethren ? Must we entertain perpetual resentments of them, contrary to so many express Commandments which the Lord has made to forgive one another ? Must you by way of revenge run to your own ruin, and even endeavour the destruction of the Protestant Religion ?

It may be said, Dearly beloved Brethren, that a resentment had carried some of you so far, and it was no want of will in them, that they lost not themselves, together with the Religion of *England*. What other thing might
be

be expected, if we judge according to all appearance, from those Addresses which you went in throngs to present to the King, to return him thanks for the Declaration which he had put forth concerning Liberty of Conscience? Was not that openly to approve of the re-establishment of Popery, and to authorise your Enemies to subvert all your Laws, and to destroy, when they pleas'd, you and your Religion? Those were in effect the fruits which they hop'd, together from those Thanksgivings which they so earnestly solicited. Blessed be God who has confounded their prudence, and destroyed all their devices.

For your parts, never forget the sorrowful effects which your Division was on the point to bring on you, and which it had infallibly produced, if God had not had mercy on you. Let those thoughts inspire in you vehement desires for peace, and make you to pass over all obstacles that might oppose themselves to it. Fear lest God should grow weary with supporting you, and that after he has threatned you, he punish you at last severely for your Separation.

It seems as if after the miraculous successes which he has given to the enterprise of your Illustrious and Glorious Liberator, you had now nothing more to fear from your Enemies. But lull not your selves asleep with that; that great God has yet a thousand ways to destroy you; and there could be no man nor Angel that could shelter you from his Justice, if he had once resolv'd to display it against you. Would you then be for ever assured of his Protection, and establish on everlasting foundations that Peace which he has newly restor'd to England? First, Re-establish your selves the Peace of the Church, and re-unite your selves with the Bishops; that according to the example of the Primitive Christians, ye may be no longer all, *but one heart and one soul*, Acts 4. 32. That is what we wish you, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. We are very sincerely, Our Dearly beloved Brethren,

A—Jan. 12th.
1685.

Your most Humble, and most Obedient Servants,

and most Affectionate Brethren in Christ Jesus.

N. N.

THE FIFTH L E T T E R.

To the Arch-bishops and Bishops of the Church of England.

My Lords,

IF the Letters we have writ to the Protestants of the Church of *England* in general, do fall into your hands, you may be at first surprized to find them from Strangers, and chiefly from unknown Persons, who endeavour to concern themselves with your Differences; yet we do not fear you will take it ill, when you shall find that these Letters relate to nothing else, but to re-establish Peace in the Bosom of your Church. We likewise hope, that you will not be displeased that at the same time we write to our Presbyterian Brethren; to exhort them to re-unite themselves with you. We give our selves the freedom to write to you in particular, to conjure you to facilitate this re-union, as much as possibly you can. The Rank you hold in the Church of *England*, and the holy Charge you execute so worthily, does on the one part lay on you an obligation to labour on this Design, with all the care you are capable of, and to give you on the other part, the means to work it most profitably.

My Lords, You know it is the end of the holy Evangelick Ministry, to assemble into one Body all the Members of Jesus Christ. St. Paul expressly teaches us, when he has said, that God has given some to be Apostles, others to be Propets, and others to be Evangelists; and some to be Pastors and Teachers: He insists, that it is to that end they should labour for the union of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, and for the Edification of the Body of Christ. The Evangelick Pastors are the Ministers of the Holy Saviour, who is the Prince of Peace; they ought to be themselves Ambassadors of Peace. They are the Pastors of his Flock, they ought then according to the example of the Prince of Pastors to run after their stray'd Sheep, to bring them into their Sheepfold.

My Lords, what grief ought you to express, to behold so great a number of the Dear flock of the Lord, of those also who ought to feed under your Sheep-Hooks, separated from the great body of your Flock, to refuse to hearken to your voice, and to follow you! We are perswaded that you sigh night and day before God, and that you continually send up your Vows to Heaven to re-establish Peace, that lovely Daughter of Heaven, in the midst of you.

But my Lords, you must not stay there, nor must you be contented to make Vows for Peace; you must contribute all your Power, knowing, that Blessed are they who procure Peace, because they shall be called the Children of God, Mat. 5. 9.

We know what respect the Clergy owes you; you are as the Soul of that great and illustrious Body, inspire that Body more and more with Love and Peace, to which it is already inclined of itself: Do the same thing for respect of all the People who live under your Ministry. You are their Leaders, guide them in the way of Peace; make them understand, that our offerings cannot be acceptable to God, till we be reconciled to our Brethren.

Above

Above all, my Lords, forget nothing to gain the Presbyterians Hearts; it is not by the Spirit of Faction, and of Schism they are separated from you; but out of a great detestation of Popery, and out of a zeal for the Reformation: They cannot endure an out-side of Religion, which does not appear to them sufficiently Evangelical: They have looked on your Reformation as imperfect, while your Church keeps a remnant of likeness with the Church of *Rome*; and not considering that that for which they blame the Church of *England*, was in effect but the outside, and did not relate to the Principles of Christianity: They thought themselves obliged to separate from it, and to make their assemblies a-part. It is true, they have gone too far, and they never ought to have run it to a Rupture; but as they have been induced by a good motive, they deserve to have some Charity and Support allowed them, and to endeavour to recall them with all kind of mildness.

The Rigour that has been used to them hitherto, served only to separate them farther from you: It is not by this way you may gain their Hearts and Minds; for the Severity of the Laws which the Emperours used against the *Donatists*, nor all the persecutions they made them suffer, had never the power to re-unite them in the Communion of the Catholick Church: On the contrary, finding themselves reduced to the last extremity by the Catholicks, they persevered in their opinions, to their utmost extremities.

We must likewise affirm, that when by the Rigour of the Laws, and Punishments, one should force the *Schismaticks* to be joined with the rest of the Church, one ought not to use such means for fear of making Hypocrites: It was the opinion of Saint *Augustin*, before the necessity in which he found himself to defend the conduct of the Catholicks, against the *Donatists* complaints, made him to take their part, to maintain, that we might justly persecute the *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*. I was (says he) formerly of this opinion, that we ought not to compell a man to be reconciled to the Church; but rather to employ our words to dispute, and to overcome by Reason, for fear to have false Catholicks, &c.

August. E-
pist. 48. ad
Vincul.

It was that, which a right Understanding and true Piety inspired that great Bishop with, while he reasoned deliberately, and without passion; and we doubt not, My Lords, but that you are of the same opinion: No, it is only by the Word, by Exhortations, and by Reasons, that we ought to labour to bring them into our Communion who are separated; it is only by such ways as Jesus Christ and his Apostles did bring into the Church Jews and Gentiles; they never, to bring them over to them, imposed the Laws of Sovereigns, nor used the severity of punishments. The Apostle Saint *Paul* has declared to us, that those carnal Weapons, as he calls them, are not those the Lord has put into the hands of the Ministers of the Gospel: Therefore treat the Presbyterians with that tenderness which is so worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Draw them into your Communion by the Bonds of Love, and Charity; and make them to lay aside, by your Moderation, that Hatred they have conceived against your

*Eph. the IV.
it, & follow-
ing verses.*

Church: It is by this you will practise that excellent Exhortation of Saint Paul, *I pray you, I who am a Prisoner in the Lord, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation to which ye are called, with all humbleness of Mind, and meekness, with long sufferings, supporting one, another through Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

But to make an entire conquest of our Brethren, who are separated from you, you must not only support their weakness with Charity, but likewise comply with them, as Saint Paul says; *Being free from all men, yet have I made my self Servant to all men, that I may win the more: To the Jews I become as a Jew, that I may win the Jews. To those who are under the Law, as though I were under the Law, that I may win them who are under the Law: To them who are without Law, as if I were without Law, when I am not without Law as pertaining to God, but am in the Law through Christ; that I may win them who are without Law: To the weak I become as Weak, that I may win the Weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some: Which implies, My Lords, that it is very requisite that you relinquish something in your Opinions, and in your Customs; and that you comply and suit your selves to the Weakness of the Presbyterians, to oblige them to be united to you. We are bold to tell you our thoughts on this, with that respect due to you; it seems to us that that opinion, that Episcopacy, as it is establish'd in your Church, is of Divine Right; and that Custom which is observed among you to confer a new Ordination on Pastors, who have been received by other Pastors, are things that ought to be sacrificed to Peace.*

We do not pretend here to enter into dispute with you; we only beg of you to reflect a little upon a tenable consequence, which may be justly drawn from the opinion we have newly mentioned. If Episcopacy is of Divine Right, it follows from hence, that neither the Churches of France, nor those of Holland; nor those of Germany, nor those of Switzerland, nor Geneva, &c. have truly had neither Ministers, nor Sacraments since the Reformation: And would you My Lords, shut up the Ministry of the Gospel, and the Sacraments of Jesus Christ in the Church of England only; and to look on the other Reformed Churches, as Churches without Ministers, and Sacraments? What a trouble would it be for that great number of Churches, who have forsaken Popery as you have, and who profess the same Faith, and have the same Worship as you, to find you in this Belief? And would not that be an obstacle to re-unite the Presbyterians to your Church?

If you renounce this opinion, that Episcopacy is of Divine Right, you must at the same time revoke the Custom of Re-ordination, which is but a dependence on it: You cannot imagine how many good Souls find themselves scandalized at this Custom; that has been chiefly a very great trouble to the French Ministers, who are dispersed every where to be obliged to receive a second Ordination from your hands, before they are able to execute their Office in the Church of England; for we must sincerely tell you, that we know many persons, whom this very consideration have dissuaded to retire into England.

In case there should be any thing else found in your Customs, in your Ceremonies, in your Prayers, and lastly in your publick Service, which may be a scandal to weak

weak Persons, it were very well if they were retrenched to smoothe the ways of Peace; and take away all obstacles that may hinder the Presbyterians to enter into your Communion.

My Lords, We beg your pardon for that Liberty with which we speak to you: for we are not ignorant that it is from you we must learn our Duty, rather than concern our selves to prescribe yours. But we have so earnest a desire to see Peace and Union in your Church, that it makes us to pass beyond those Limits which we should inviolably observe on any occasion but this.

We also flatter our selves with this belief, that this liberty we take will not be disagreeable to you; you love Peace, you are disposed to doe all that shall belong to you, to re-establish the Church of *England*; nor do we propose any thing, but what you would doe of your selves in favour of a Re-union.

My Lords, What a worthy Disposition is this of true Bishops, and of true Ministers of Jesus Christ, in one word worthy of you; you show by that, that you are truly endued with the same Spirit, as were the Great and Holy Bishops of the Primitive Church, who had so great a zeal for Unity: You follow the ways of Saint *Paul*, who had so great a Condescension for all kind of Persons: You imitate the Charity of Saint *John*, the beloved Disciple of Jesus Christ, of that Disciple whom the Antients called the Apostle of Charity, because he was thoroughly imbued with that admirable Vertue, there being nothing he had recommended to the faithfull with so much care. My Lords, Signalize on this occasion that passionate Love which inflames you, as you have highly signalized of late your zeal for your Country, and for Religion. The whole Church has beheld, with wonder, the greatness of courage you have shown in this most critical, and most important conjuncture, that, it may be, has ever been seen; you have most worthily supported your Character, in spite of all menaces and punishments that threatned to shake you; you have been faithfull to your King, and you have exactly obeyed his Commands, while you could doe it without wounding your Consciences: But he no sooner required things contrary *Art. 4th* to the Duty you owed to God, but you, remembering that it is more just *19th* to obey God than Men, you had no more to doe with a King, from whose *20th* anger you ought to fear every thing, when he would set up Popery in *England*, in defiance of the most solemn Laws of the Kingdom: You opposed him openly with the hazard of all that was most dear to you: You generously sacrificed all your Temporal concerns for the interest of Religion, and your Country; and we may say, that by your Resolution and Zeal, and by the Imprisonment that some of you suffered, with so much Constancy, you saved one and the other from utter Ruine.

It is with the same Courage, as formerly we beheld Saint *Ambrose* resist the Emperour *Valentinian* the Second, and the Empress *Justina* his Mother, when they would have set up *Arianism* in *Milan*, in the ruines of the Catholick Religion: My Lords, how brave and glorious is it for you to tread in the path of this great and generous Prelate.

We can add nothing more to your Glory, than for you to settle an inward Peace in the Church of *England*, after you were so highly instrumental in the

outward Peace; there remains nothing but that, to crown your Conduct, and to render your Names Immortal: Your memory shall be for ever blessed in the Church, and when the Prince of Pastors shall appear, you shall receive from his hands the incorruptible Crown of Glory. In the mean time, may the Sovereign Pastor more and more bless your Persons, and your Ministry, and your Church: These are the vows which zealously fly to Heaven, from,

My Lords,

Your Most Humble,

and Most Obedient Servants,

N. N.

January the
12th, 1689.

The Sixth Letter. To the Lords and Commons of England.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

WE have formerly writ many Letters into *England*, and we are now writing others thither, to endeavour to dispose their minds to Peace, and to a Re-union under the same Ministry, but we should believe we had omitted the principal, if we did not address our selves to you in a particular Letter. We know not at what time, nor after what manner you will assemble your selves; the King having revoked, before his flight, the orders he had given to call a Free Parliament; but whatsoever it be, we hope you will be shortly assembled, if ye are not already: And we are persuaded, that it would be in vain to endeavour to re-unite all the Protestants in *England* into one Body, if you do not concern your selves, and if at the same time you break not the ice to this great Affair, by your Authority and Wisdom.

My Lords and Gentlemen, We know you have before you an infinite number of other Affairs of the last importance, and capable to wholly take up your concerns. The Desertion of *Britain's* Majesty did put *England* into a kind of *Interregnum*, in which time you underwent all the Affairs of State, with your Great and Glorious Deliverer; and this *Interregnum* following an Unjust and Tyrannick Government, which left all in confusion, it is for you to settle all things in a right order, where they are to move.

My Lords and Gentlemen, It is that which all *England* expects from you, that you declare who are the Lawfull Heirs to the Crown, and keeping it for them who claim it by Birth-right; you will for ever put it out of all dispute to let it fall to Strangers, or to those who had Plotted that black and abominable design. The Kingdom expects from you to re-establish the Laws, which have been almost wholly ruined; to keep their Liberties and Privileges, which they endeavoured to infringe, and to settle her in quiet, which she saw was troubled by wicked and disaffected Persons.

My

My Lords and Gentlemen, Answer this so great expectation: God forbid, that we should think you should neglect it: Be you the Restorers of the Laws, and Liberties of the People; the Support and Prop of the safety of the Kingdom: In a word, Be you the Fathers of *England*, and to establish there a Peace and Eternal Happiness, preserve the Crown faithfully for the right Blood of her Kings, and discover to all the world the Infamous and horrid Designs that were practis'd to force it from her.

But as you are concerned to labour for the welfare of the Kingdom, so you are not to forget the Interests of the Church: She deserves so well of you, that you allow her a part of your Cares: *She is the Spouse of the Son of God*: She is the Mother who has begot you for *Jesus Christ*; and by this New Birth you have acquired, you are become her Children, and the Heirs of the *King of Kings*.

This good Mother, to whom you have such high obligations, My Lords and Gentlemen, groans to see her self not only persecuted by her Enemies, but also ris'd by her own Children; she bewails to see her Liberties abolish'd, her Sanctuaries demolished, her Ministers exil'd, her Flocks despersed and expos'd to an infinite number of Torments and Deaths; but that which increaseth most her sorrow, are those Divisions which reign in her bosom, in lieu of Unity and Peace, which ought to flourish there in all seasons.

Endeavour to dry up her tears, My Lords and Gentlemen: Comfort those of her Children which the *French* Persecution has forc'd to seek for shelter amongst you: Make them to feel in their greatest Misery the extraordinary effects of your Charity: Seek out the means of procuring her a Calm, in those places, where she is beaten and tosd by the storm of Persecution. Cause, in *England* at least, that she may enjoy, under the shelter of your Authority, a profound Peace, and a firm and established Quiet; and at the same time, that your Laws shall protect her from the fury of her Enemies, give her farther, the comfort of seeing an end to all those Divisions with which she is afflicted.

But remember, My Lords and Gentlemen, to employ to the execution of that great Design but legitimate Means. As great, and far extended as is your Authority, it would ougo its lawfull bounds, should you employ the severity of the Laws, and the Terror of Penalties, in re-uniting to the Body of your Church, those that are separated from it. The Power over Consciences, belong to God alone, he has reserv'd that Authority to himself: And it is encroaching his Rights, it is making an attempt against his Sovereign Authority, to give Laws to Consciences.

That which we have said, My Lords and Gentlemen, ties not up your hands, as to Popery. That is the never to be reconciled Enemy, not only of Christ, and of his Church, but of Sovereigns, and of Protestant States also. It is the Plague, not only of Religion, but of the Civil Society also: Against it therefore you may let loose justly, all the Vigour of the Laws: True Policy allows not of it in any State which God has freed from its Tyranny. That is not to give Laws to Consciences, that is to rid one's self from a Publick Enemy: It is to provide for the safety of the Religion, and of the State. Yet, if there were any

any *Papists* found, who against the Maxims and Practices of their Church, would live amongst you like good honest Citizens, and in that subjection which is due to the Laws, they doubtless ought not to be banished out of their own Country, nor divested of their Means, nor persecuted in any wise. It would be unjust to exercise such violences against them, under pretence they were a far other Religion than yours.

But as to that which concerns the Presbyterians, who are together good Citizens and good Protestants, and who are separated from the Episcopal Church, but through an Over-zeal for Reformation, it seems to us, that far from making new Laws against them, it were fit, on the contrary, to abolish the old Ones; that it should not only be permitted them to live in Peace and without molestation in their Houses, but to give them likewise a sufficient Liberty of Conscience, to calm their disturbed minds, fretted by the ill usages which they have formerly received, and to dispose them to re-unite themselves with the Bishops.

Might you not also, My Lords and Gentlemen, Make choice of some of the wisest and most moderate Persons of your Houses, to labour in this Re-union under your Authority and your Orders? Such Commissioners would be very proper, to find out expedients, to propose them, to level the difficult Obstacles, to manage the minds, and finally to inspire to both Parties thoughts full of Charity and of Peace.

But what do we do? We seem to set down to you what you your selves are doing, as if the most Enlightned, the Wisest, and the most Honourable Assembly in the World had need of our weak and dim lights; and that our Counsels could be of any use to it. No, My Lords and Gentlemen, that's not our thought we have no other design, than to discover to you, with all the respect which we owe you, the vehement passion we have for the Re-union of the whole Church of *England* in one Body. It is your parts to re-establish Peace in it, by such means as your Prudence shall inspire you. Permit your selves to be guided but by your Piety and by your Zeal; and by that experienced Wisdom, which usually rules your deliberations, and God will conclude, if he pleases, that great Work: He will open you the way of Peace; and he will give an happy Success to those Cares you shall bring, to re-establish it in your Church.

We earnestly beseech him, My Lords and Gentlemen, that he shower his powerfull Blessings on all the just designs of your Assembly; that he preside there with his Holy Spirit, that he enlighten it with his Understanding, and that he inspire it withall, that it shall have occasion to resolve for the Good of the State, and Religion. We are, with a profound respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

A. Jan. 12th
1684.

*Your most Humble, and
most Obedient Servants,*

N. N.

*The Seventh Letter. To his Highness, the Prince of Orange.**My Lord,*

IF the Subject of which we are to entertain *your Highness*, was not extremely important; We should not undertake to deprive, by this Letter, your great Concerns, from any of those precious Moments which you employ in so usefull and so glorious a manner: But in the design we have to contribute all that we can possible to the Re-union of all the Protestants of *England*, in one Body of a Church, and under one Ministry; we should fail in our Duties, if we did not flie to *Your Highness*, who is only capable to put the last hand to this Work, whence the Protestant Religion would draw such considerable advantages.

Is it not from *Your Highness*, My Lord, that we have reason to expect the performance of that great Design from You, in whose hands the most difficult enterprizes become easie from you, whose Piety is known over all *Europe*; from you in fine, to whom the Church of *England* owes already her Preservation and Deliverance; and to whom it seems, that God has reserv'd the Glory to be the Prop, and the Liberator of the whole Reformed Church?

The whole Earth sees, My Lord, that *Your Highness*, is born for Great things. No Body is ignorant that, almost at your stepping out of Infancy, and at your very first bearing of Arms, You sav'd *Holland*, by unheard of Miracles of Courage and Prudence; That You did tear it out of the hands of a Triumphant Monarch, who at the head of his Armies had already carried off a great part of it; and who, puff'd up with his Victories, did look on it wholly as the Prey of his Ambition.

That great Exploit was not yet forgot, My Lord, when *Your Highness* was seen to undertake and to put in execution something more surprizing yet and more difficult; when you were seen to flie at the relief of *England*, which began to groan under a Tyrannical Government, and under the power of Popery; and to deliver it from that cruel Oppression, with a dilligence and ease which borders on Prodiges.

It belongs to the Princes of your Name, My Lord, to immortalise their Memory, by Exploits of this Nature. The State of the United Provinces, freed from the Yoke of *Spain*, and from the Tyranny of *Rome*, shall be an Eternal Monument of the Glory of the House of *Nassau*. But we may say, that what *Your Highness* has done, in favour of *England*, concludes the Crowning of that Princely great House, with a Ray of Glory, which all the Great and Immortal Actions of your Ancestors had not given it.

Yes, My Lord, that which shall astonish the future Ages, after it has made the admiration of ours, is that wonderfull Conjunction which is to be observed in *Your Highness's* Person, of the Heroes Vertues, with those of the Christian; of the Military and Politick Vertues, with those that are Evangelical; of Courage, Valour, Ability, and Prudence; with Piety, and Zeal for Religion.

It is, above all, My Lord, to *Your Highness's* Zeal, that that important enterprise is to be attributed, which you have lately performed with so much good Fortune, and so much Glory. It is your Zeal, which push'd you on to sacrifice your

your Quiet, and even your Life, to *England's* safety; and to support its tottering Liberty, through the greatest Perils of Sea and Land. It is your Zeal, in a word, which has preserv'd thereat the same time both Religion and the State, from an infallible Ruine, of which they both were equally threatned.

Continue, My Lord, to give such remarkable proofs of that Zeal with which *Your Highness* finds your self animated. The Eyes of the whole Church are fix'd upon You: She looks on You from the midst of those Persecutions she suffers, as her Deliverer and Restorer; as a Tutelary Angel which God has sent her, in a time, when she had all to fear, from the Fury and the Power of her merciless Enemies. Refuse her not your Protection; make her to breath again under the shade of your Palms, and of your Lawrels: Heal those profound wounds, which she has received from her most cruel Persecutors; and cause her to be at peace all over *Europe*, as you have done in *England*.

But add, My Lord, the Internal Peace of the Church of *England*, to that External Peace that it owes you; smother all those Divisions which disturb her; re- unite into one single Body, all the Diverſ Members of which she is composed, but who are unfortunately separated one from another. *Your Highness* shall no sooner know your desire for that Re-union, but they will all strive who shall first, to satisfy your just desires, and to shew you what a respectfull deference they have for you.

What can one refuse to such a Prince as is *Your Highness*? To a great and Illustrious Prince, by a birth which yeilds nothing to that of the greatest Monarchs; but much more Great and Illustrious yet, by that innumerable number of Vertues, with which God has adorn'd You? What could *England*, above all, refuse to a Prince of the blood of her Kings, who is himself so worthy of the Throne, and to whom she has such great Obligations?

We hope, My Lord, that *Your Highness* is desirous to take some care to cause the design of Re-union of the Protestants of the Kingdom to succeed: God will shower his Blessing on it, as he has done hitherto on your other Enterprises; and he will finally give us the Consolation to see the whole English Church gathered together, in the same Churches, and under the same Ministers: It is what we require of him, in our most Ferrent Prayers.

We humbly Beseech him at the same time, with all the Devotion we are capable of, that he fill daily more and more *Your Highness* with his most precious Graces, that he cover You with his powerfull Protection, to preserve You from all sorts of Dangers; that he dearly preserve both You, My Lord, and *Her Highness*, Your Illustrious Spouse; and that he bring forth from *Your Highnesses*, an happy Posterity, which may supply *England* with Kings, and the Church with Protectors, to the most remote Ages. We are, with an inviolable Respect, Veneration, and Zeal,

My Lord, *Your Highness*,

A. January

Your most Humble, most Obedient, and

12th 1682.

most submissive Servants. N. N.

F I N I S.

French Protestants

Now Relug'd in

GERMANY

FROM THE

Tyrannical Persecution of FRANCE,

Concerning the

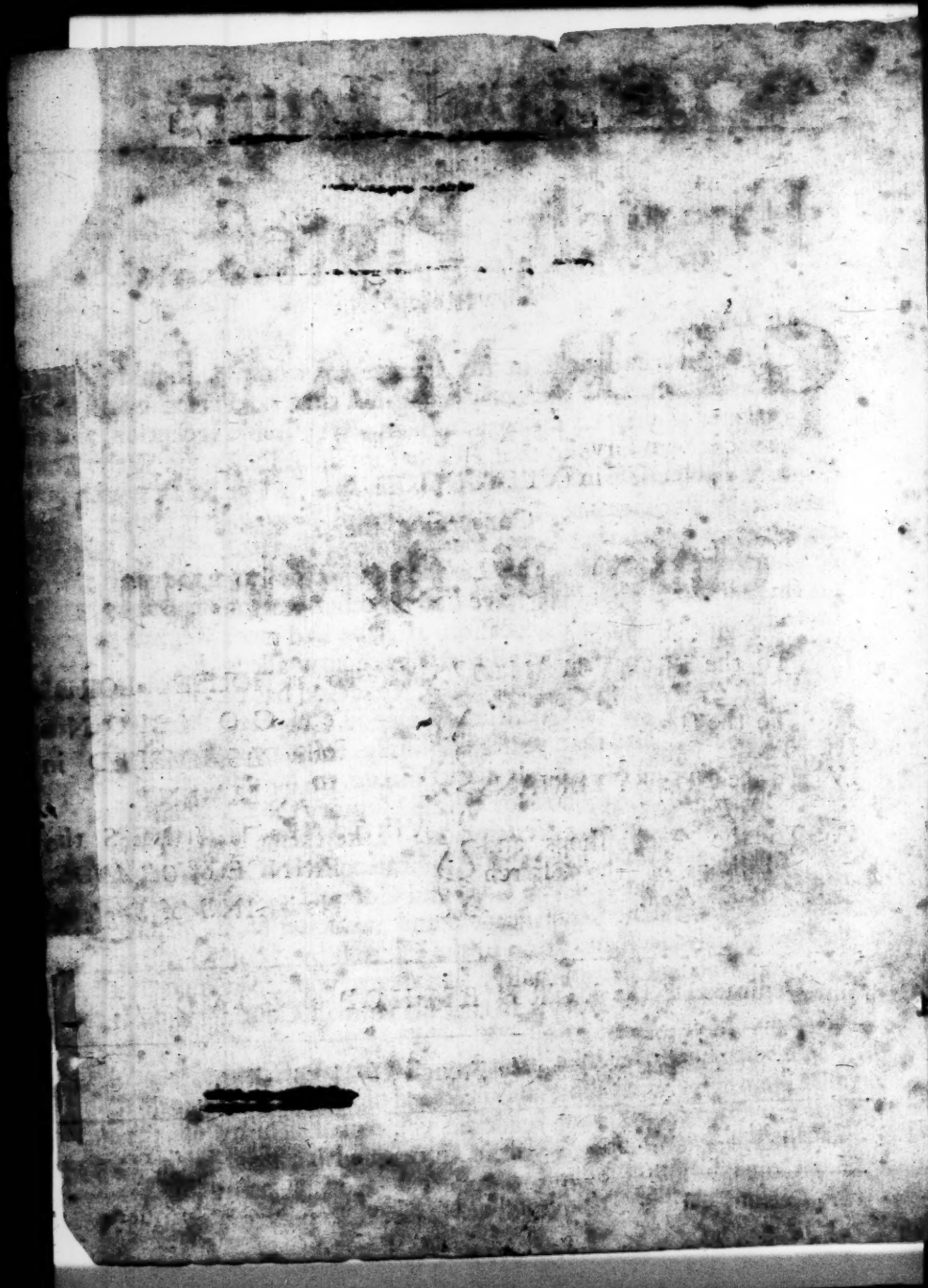
Unity of the Church.

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| I. To the <i>Assembly</i>
of <i>England</i> in General. | { | VII. To the <i>HOUSE</i>
and <i>COMMONS</i>
now <i>Assembled</i>
in <i>PARLIAMENT</i> . | | |
| II. To the same. | | { | VIII. To the <i>HIGHNESS</i>
of the <i>PRINCE</i> of <i>ORANGE</i>
Now <i>KING</i> of <i>England</i> . | |
| III. To the same. | | | { | |
| IV. To the <i>PRESBYTERIANS</i>
of <i>England</i> . | | | | |
| V. To the <i>Archbishops</i> and
<i>Bishops</i> of the <i>Church</i>
of <i>England</i> . | | | | |

Dedicated to the LORD BISHOP of LONDON.

Translated from the French, by P. P. G.

LONDON Printed at the ...



T O

My LORD BISHOP of LONDON.

My Lord,

I have not Ballanc'd in my Choice to whom I should Address these Letters, I presently imagin'd that no Person could be so proper as you, to procure to them a favourable reception, and to make them serve to that Design for which they were Writ. That Dignity you possess in the Church of England, The Rank which you hold in the Parliament, The Esteem that all England has for you, and that Justice which that Great Prince your Liberator renders Himself to your Merits; all this, My Lord, could not fail to make me Resolve on this Choice, should I have had no other Reasons. But give me leave to say, that in this occasion, I have had more Regard to your Personal Qualities, than to all that I have now alledg'd.

All the World knows, My Lord, that God has happily Assembled in your Person, all the Qualities of a good Christian, and those of a good Prelate; and that you Religiously follow the Traces of those Holy Bishops, which made their Virtue to be admired in the first Ages of Christianity, and for whose Memory the Church still to this Day preserves so great a Veneration. Like them, you Watch Day and Night with an extream Application over that Flock of which the Lord has given you the Care and Conduct; and you forget nothing to forward the Sanctification and Salvation of it. Like them, you are equally in Edification to the Church by your Ministry, and your Exemplary Life. Finally, like them, you are ever constant and unmoveable in your Duty, so that no Human Consideration is capable to divert you from it.

Who can doubt of this, that has seen that Resolution, that Admirable Firmness, with which you resisted of late the Power of Unjust Judges, who would have rendered you equally Guilty of their Unjust Practices, and oblig'd you to Concur with them, in the Design of a Court wholly devoted to Popery? How Worthy of you was this Action, My Lord, worthy that Great Reputation of Piety, of

The Epistle DEDICATORY.

Zeal, of Probity, and of Virtue, which you had already acquired. And how Glorious was that **SUSPENSION** which you did undergo with so much Courage?

I dare not say all that I think, *My Lord*, I know how great your Modesty is, and I should fear to offend it, giving you all the Praises which are due to you. I shall only add, that one of the greatest Motives that I have had to Chuse you for Protector to these Letters, is the Love which you have for Peace, and for the Unity of the Church.

Your Charity, *My Lord*, is equal to your Piety. It is that Charity, with which your Heart is inflam'd, which makes you Consider'd as the Father of the Poor. It is that which has been the Refuge of divers Thousands of our Brothers, which the greatest Persecution that ever was seen, has forc'd to abandon both their Wealth and their Country to follow Christ, and to cleave to the Possession of his Holy Gospel. And it is the same also which Inspires in you Desires of Moderation and of Peace towards the Presbyterians, and which makes you so Ardently to Wish to see them Reunited to your Church.

I have therefore all reason to hope, *My Lord*, that Letters which have no other Aim but to forward that Re-Union, will not displease you; and if you believe they can produce any Fruit, you will be pleas'd to take upon you the Care to Present them to the Parliament, and to his Highness the Prince of Orange, with the further trouble to Communicate them to those other Persons whom you shall think fit to impart them. May it please God to accompany them with the Power of his Holy Spirit, and to give them an happy success!

May God, also, *My Lord*, fill you with his most precious Blessings; and Preserve you, during the course of many Years, for his Glory, and the Good of his Church! I am with a Profound Respect,

My Lord,

Your most Humble and most

Obedient Servant, N.

From——the 12th
of January, 1683.

(5)

ADVERTISEMENT.

T Hese Letters were writ at the time of their Date, that is, in January 1683. before that Convention of ENGLAND was assembled; and consequently before the King and Queen, now Reigning so gloriously in Great Britain, were raised on the Throne. They were also printed and sent to London in that very time. But some persons of great worth, to whom they were communicated, thought fit not to render them so soon publick, and to stay, to that end, till the Affairs of the Kingdom would admit of a serious Consideration in the Re-establishment of the Peace in the Church.

The time being come to work on that great Design, it has been thought that they might be of use to the PUBLICK, that they were not to be conceal'd from it any longer. Therefore they are now bestow'd on it, without any alteration; tho' they contain divers things, which are now out of season, after so great a Charge as has hapned even in the publick Affairs.

For Example, there is mention made in them of the King of England, under the Notion of Prince of Orange, which, at that time, was his Name; and it is under that very Name that the last Letter is directed to that great Monarch. In that which is directed to the Lords and Commons of England, it is desired, They should faithfully preserve the Crown, for the true Blood of their Kings; That they give a sufficient Liberty of Conscience to the Presbyterians; That at the same time they employ all the Rigor of their Laws against Popery; yet Tolerate such Papists as would live amongst them as good and honest Citizens, and in a due Submission to the Laws: All this has been done by the Convention, or by that Parliament that has succeeded it. It is also requir'd, That Commissioners be nam'd to labour in the Re-union of the Presbyterians to the Church of England; and that is what has been done by the KING, after the separation of the Parliament.

The Reader had doubtless of himself observ'd all that has been said, without this Advertisement; and he will easily take notice in the Letters of divers other things of the same Nature, which there is no necessity to mention here. It has been thought convenient to insist on two only, of which it is necessary to give some Information in few words.

The first thing is, what is said in the 4th and 5th Letter, concerning the Zeal with which the Bishops have oppos'd the Re-establishment of Popery, of their Charity towards the Presbyterians, and of the Love they have for Peace; unto which it is suppos'd they are in a condition to sacrifice some of their Opinions and Customs. There are a sort of persons found, that maintain the Bishops are not well known; and that it is rather in hatred to the Presbyterians, than to the Papists; That they have oppos'd themselves to King James II's Declaration, concerning Liberty of Conscience. They alledge for proof of that, the Refusal which divers amongst them have made, to take the Oath which this present KING now Reigning requir'd of them; and they pretend that this Refusal is grounded on the Fear they have that His MAJESTY having been brought amongst the Presbyterians of Holland, he might be too favourable to those of England.

There are some who go further yet, and say, that this way of proceeding is an effect of that secret Affection which the Bishops have for a Popish King, and even for Popery itself.

But what reason is there to accuse the Bishops to have less Hatred for the Papists, than for the Presbyterians? What have they done which can give place to so Odious a suspicion, to have such a Tendency for Popery, and that they have a design to favour it? Such a Scandalous Accusation ought not to be propos'd, without convincing Proofs; and to Justifie those Prelats, that their Enemies cannot alledge any thing capable of making the least Impression in the Minds of Just Persons.

That Constancy with which they have oppos'd themselves to that Declaration we have mention'd, is, on the contrary, whatever is said of it, a proof which ought to convince the whole World of their Hatred against Popery, and of their Zeal for the Protestant Religion. Can Equity suffer, that such a Constancy should be Imputed to the Hatred which some pretend they have against the Presbyterians? And is it not the greatest of all Injustice, to Tarnish so Glorious an Action with the wrong sense which is given to it, without the least appearance of Reason?

It is in vain to produce the refusal which some Prelats have made to take the Oaths to this present King; we pretend not here to approve nor to excuse, what they have done; nay, it will not be difficult to say, that it is found very worthy of Reproof: Neither do any one pretend to seek after the Reasons of it. But whatever they are, must the fault of some particulars be imputed to a whole Body, to so illustrious a Body as that of the Bishops of England? And generally speaking, can it be denied that those Bishops are little good Protestants and good Subjects?

In fine, it is declar'd, that what has been said, of the Bishops fighting after Re-Union, and disposition to lay aside, to that purpose, some of their Opinions and Practices, is on those Informations which have been receiv'd from London, and from very good Hands.

Those Conferences which will be made on that subject, will be a Touchstone, which will discover, whether these Intelligences were Just.

The Second thing which ought to be rendered clear is, to shew it is the Presbyterians part to return to the Episcopal Church, rather than the Bishops to go over to the Presbyterian Church. It is alledged in the Fourth Letter, that the Episcopal Church has on its side the Laws, and Possession; whereas the Presbyterian Church has neither Possession, nor Laws, on its side, and that on the contrary the Laws are wholly opposit to it; that is no longer true, it will be said, since the King and Parliament have made a New Law, to permit to the Nonconformists the exercise of their Religion; so that this reason can no longer be offer'd.

To this is answer'd, That it is true, the Laws are no longer contrary to the Presbyterians; but that the Liberty which the Laws give them, far from dissuading them, to Renuer with the Bishops, is ought rather to dispose their Minds to this Renou. It was on that Ground that a Liberty of Conscience was desired for them from the Lords and Commons, as may be seen in the Sixth Letter. When all is done, That Toleration which is granted to the Presbyterians by the New Laws, takes not any of the Rights of the Church of England from it, and lessens not its Privileges. It is still the same Trunk of the Tree, to which all the Boughs are to be united. It is still the predominant Church

Church, and its Religion is still the Religion of the State: So that tho' this Church has no Condescension for the Presbyterians, and that She should reprove teaching of Her Ceremonies, nor Customs, they would still be oblig'd to Revolve themselves to Her; They could not lawfully remain separated from it, except it was guilty of Heresie, Idolatry, or of Tyranny, as it is express'd in these Letters.

The Authors of those Letters, however, persist in the Sentiment they have follow'd in them; that, to succeed in the design of the Reunion of the PROTESTANTS of England, all Parties ought to relinquish something on their part: It is by that way only, that hopes can be entertain'd to work in it with success. God be pleas'd so to inspire both Parties, that they may breathe nothing but Peace and Charity.

Letters writ into England, by some French Protestants retired into Germany, from the French Persecution, concerning the Unity of the Church.

The First Letter.

TO THE
Protestants of ENGLAND in General.

Our most Dear Brethren,

THere is nothing more deplorable than Schism, and when God permits it to disturb the Church, it is to be consider'd as one of the most terrible Scourges of his Wrath; Who would not then be concern'd to see *Christendom* in that condition it is in at present? To see not only the *East* separated from the *West*, since so many Ages; not only in our *Western* parts, the *Protestant Church* separated from the *Roman Church*; not only in the *Protestant Church*, the *Reformed* separated from the *Lutherans*: But, moreover, those *Reformed*, separated one from another, to form divers different Societies. Who would not be mov'd, above all, to see the *Church of England*, that Flourishing Church, which makes so considerable a part of the *Reformed Church*, separated in two Bodies, who have no External Communion amongst them? Not to mention divers little *Sects* which have risen from them, and increased the Division.

All the Reformed in *Europe* look on this Division and Separation, with a deep Sorrow; and, for our parts, th^t it should seem that the Sense of our own Evils would render us less sensible to that of others; We are yet touch'd to the quick, with that Division which reigns in your Church. Would to God, *our dear Brethren*, that we who are sadly dispersed, might contribute something to the Cure of your Wounds! That would be a Consolation, that would, in some measure, sweeten the Bitterness of our Souls.

We are persuaded, that your Selves sigh most ardently after Peace; and that your Divisions are to be attributed to your Enemies Intrigues, rather than to your own Inclinations. You, doubtless, are not ignorant, That *Schism* is entirely oppos'd to *Charity*, which is as the Soul of Christian Religion; and to the Will of Christ, which being *Charity* itself, will have us to be animated with a *Charity* like his. But seeing the Condition your CHURCH is in, is a Testimony you have not sufficiency of Horror for *Schism*; permit us to address some Reflections to you, which we have made on this Subject, and which ought to oblige you to reunite your selves all into one Communion.

Christ Jesus, to move us to the practice of *Charity*, makes an Elogy of that excellent Virtue in divers places of the Gospel. It is in *Charity* that he includes all the Duties which God requires of us in his Law, and in the Writings of the Prophets. It is to *Charity* that he promises Life Everlasting when he is consulted, to know what is to be done to obtain it; and it is by their *Charity* also that he would have his Disciples known.

But that which expresses most, how acceptable *Charity* is to him, and how much he is pleas'd with Unity and Peace in his Church, was, his making but one people of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which, before his coming to the World, were separated one from the other, with a Bar which God had set with his own hands, which, till then, could not be broken down. It may also be said, That the great Design for which he is come, was to assemble all the people on Earth into one Church, as a Shepherd gathers his Sheep in one Sheepfold, and makes of them but one Flock. This is the Comparison which he has been pleas'd to use himself, when speaking of the *Gentiles*, he said, *That he had other sheep which were not of that sheepfold*; that is, of the Jewish Church, which he was able to bring thither, that they would hear his voice; and there would be one only flock, and one only shepherd.

St. Paul represents the same thing under other Similitudes, very proper to shew not only the Unity of the Church in general, but also the strict Union of its parts amongst themselves.

He sometimes represents the Church, as a Building. It is, says he, a City, of which Christ has made the *Jews* and *Gentiles* Citizens, having broke down the partition-wall which separated them from one another. It is a Church built on the Apostles, and on the Prophets; or, rather on Christ, who is the Corner-stone of that Foundation; in whom all the Building compleat together, groweth into an Holy Temple in the Lord.

Sometimes he considers it as one single human Body, as a Body of which Christ is the Head, and the Believers the Members, 1 Cor. xii. *As the Body is one, and hath many Members; and all the Members of the Body, which is one, tho' they be many, yet are but one Body, even so is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all Baptized in one Body.* After that, having observ'd, that tho' the Members of the Body are different one from the other, they are all necessary, that God has diversly plac'd them as he pleas'd; and that we Honour the most those that are less Honourable; he adds, that God has set that Order in the Members, *Left there should be any Division in the Body, but that the Members should have the same Care one for another.* And immediately after he thus goes on, *If one Member suffer, all suffer with him; if one Member be had in Honour, all the Members rejoice with it. Now we are the Body of Christ, and Members for your part.*

In another place he Wishes, *Ephes. iv. that following Truth in Charity we grow up in all things in the Lord, who is the Head; by which, continues he, the Body being well United into a perfect Man, and into the measure of the Age of the fulness of Christ by Charity.* And a little before in the Argument which he had drawn from that Idea which he gave of the Church, he represents it as the Body of Christ; he had added divers other Motives to lead us to Charity, to Peace, and Union. He had said, *I therefore, being a Prisoner in the Lord, Pray you, that you walk worthy of the Vocation wherunto you are call'd, with all Humbleness of Mind, and Meekness, with long Suffering, supporting one another through Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* This is the Exhortation which he gives us, and these are the strong Motives that he insists upon, *There is one Body and one Spirit; he adds presently after, Even as ye are called in hope of your Vocation. There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, which is all, and through all, and in you all.*

You see, our Dearly Beloved Brethren, how many Motives that Holy Apostle uses, to infuse into us a Love to Unity; whence it is easie to infer, That that Schism which broke the Bonds of Unity, cannot but be infinitely guilty; what Crime is it not, what Sacrilege, to Violate that Charity which Christ has recommended to us with so much Care, thus to disperse his Flock; thus to divide his Dear Jerusalem, his Holy Temple, thus to tear his Mystical Body.

Yet we are not to forget, that what Love soever we ought to have for Unity, we are oblig'd more to have for Love, Truth and Piety. That conserves the Glory of God, and our own Salvation, to preserve them both; and those are such great Concerns, that we ought to prefer them to all things.

St. Paul who so earnestly recommends to us Unity, joins Truth with Charity in one of those places that we have Cited; *Ephes. iv. 15.* and by that shews, that Charity has its Bounds, and that it never ought to go so far, as to make us preserve Unity to the prejudice of Truth. And in another place he enjoins us, *To avoid him who is an Heretick.* That is to say, doubtless, not to have any Conversation with *Tir. iii. 10.* such a one, above all, in Religion.

He is not less Jealous of the Concerns of Piety, than of Truth; and that is the reason why he forbids us to have any Communion with the Idolaters; *1 Cor. x. 14.*

cannot Drink, says he, the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of the Devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the Table of the Devils. He Concludes, in one place, to the Celebration of the Holy Communion; and in the other, to those Feasts which the Heathens made in the Solemnity of their Sacrifices; and he would give us to understand, that we cannot partake in no manner of the Worship of the Idols, without Renouncing the Worship of the Lord, and consequently, without destroying of Piety.

In an other place he speaks yet more to the purpose on the same subject; and he expressly Teaches us, that we ought to Separate from the Infidels and the Idolaters. *Be not unequally Yoked with the Infidels*, says he, *for what Fellowship has Righteousness with Unrighteousness? And what Communion has Light with Darkness? And what Concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the Believer with the Infidel? And what Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? For ye are the Temple of the Living God; as God has said, I will Dwell amongst them, and Walk there, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. Wherefore, come out from amongst them, and Separate your selves*, says the Lord, *and touch no Unclean thing, and I will receive you. And I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my Sons and Daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty.

In general, St. Paul will have, That if any one does Preach to us any other Doctrines than those which are contain'd in the Gospel, which we have received, which must be Infallibility understood, as to the Doctrines of Faith, and those that relate to the Worship; that we should pronounce Anathema against him; were he an Apostle, a Paul; were he an Angel of Heaven.

But it is necessary to Observe, that when we say, according to the Doctrin of that Apostle, That we are to prefer Truth and Piety before Unity; that is, to be understood but of the Essence of Truth, and of the Evangelical Piety; that is to say, to that which Christian Religion has Essential in it, and without which it cannot subsist. There are some Doctrines and Practices which give a just occasion of Separation: And therefore, they which overturn the fundamental Truths of Christianity, or that are incompatible with true Piety; such as are the Capital Errors of Hereticks, and the Impieties of Idolaters. But there are others, which as contrary as they are either to Truth or to Piety, suffer still the Ground and Essence of Religion to subsist; such as are the weak Errors, and certain Superstitious Practices; and it would be Unjust and Criminal to Separate from ones Brethren for Errors or Practices of that Nature.

It is still the Doctrin of the same Apostle, At the same time that he Orders us to avoid Hereticks, and to Separate from Idolaters, as before; he will have us on the contrary, To Receive such as are Weak in the Faith, and that we sure our selves to their Practices, for fear of being Scandalous to them.

We must then acknowledge, that according to the Doctrin of St. Paul, there are two kinds of Separation; the one is lawful, and allowed of, and likewise very

very necessary; the other is unjust and Criminal, and consequently for bidden. The lawful Separation, is that by which we preserve the Essence of the Truth, of the Christian Faith, and of Piety, or of the Evangelick Worship; they Renounce the Communion of Hereticks and Idolaters, who wholly Ruin Faith and Piety by their false Principles, and by their false Worship. And the unjust Separation is that, by which they separate themselves from a Society, or from a Person, who Reserves all the Essence of Truth and Godliness, tho' there may be something to be taken away either in Doctrine, or Practice.

One and the other of these Separations may be made, either by way of Retrenchment, or by means of letting them alone. The Separation by way of Retrenching is no other thing than Excommunication; and Separation by way of laying them aside, is made, when we abandon of our selves a Society, with which we will have no Communion.

The Catholicks Anciently Separated themselves from the *Arrians* by way of Retrenching, when they Anathematized those Hereticks in the famous Council of *Nice*. And in latter times our Fathers Separated themselves from the *Roman Church*, by the way of having nothing to do with them; when they forsook their Communion, to render to God the true Worship he required of his Children. And these Two Separations were both very lawful.

Was there any thing more Just than to Excommunicate the *Arrians*? Than to Expell them from the Bosome of the *Catholick Church* those Hereticks who denied the Eternal Divinity of the Son of God, and who Ruined by that means all the Mystery of our Redemption? That way they Undermined the Foundations of the Christian Religion, and quite overturned it.

But was there any thing more Just than to forsake the Communion of the *Roman Church*? Of a Church that Taught an infinite number of Capital Errors in their Doctrines; whose Worship was full of Superstition, and Idolatry, and whose Government was degenerated to an insufferable Tyranny? Their Commission was brought to that point, that their Communion could no longer be but dreadful, *Apoc. 18. 2. & 17. 5. She was become a Dwelling for Devil, and the Mother of Fornications, and of all the Abominable things of the World.* And then it was our most happy Ancestors made a Separation. They Obed the Heavenly Voice, that Cried to them, To depart from that Wicked Babylon, for fear they should partake of their Wickedness, and be involved in their Wounds, *Apoc. 18. 4.*

But on the other side the *Arrians* Separated themselves from the *Catholick Church*, by way of laying them aside; when they began to have Separate Assemblies. And the *Roman Church* did Separate her self from our Fathers, by way of Retrenching; for she Anathematized them in the Council of *Trent*. And both these Separations were very Unjust and very Criminal, because both in one and the other they divided from that Party that professed Truth and Godliness; and that they Separated to cast themselves into Error and Ungodliness.

It is not only the Separation of Hereticks and Idolaters, which is Unjust and Criminal; that of the Schismatics is also guilty, whether they break the Bonds of the Communion with all the rest of the Church, or only with some

Church, or some particular person, about indifferent things, such as make not a the essential part of Religion.

Such was the Separation of the *Novatists*, who in the bottom retaining the whole Essence of Faith, and of Piety, did separate themselves from the Body of the Catholick Church, because it received to its Communion, and to its Peace, those that were fallen during the Persecution; and did admit to the participation of the holy Communion those who had sinned after Baptism, and afterwards expressed a Repentance of their Errors. For, not to say here that the Catholicks were in the right in the Conclusion, that was but a dispute of Discipline, which consequently touched not the essential part of Christianity.

Such also was the Separation of the *Donatists*, who abandon'd the Society of the same Catholicks, under pretence of some personal Faults, of which they accus'd *Ceciliannus*, Bishop of *Carthage*, or those from whom he had received the Episcopal Ordination; which Accusations they could never prove, as *St. Austin* reproches them in divers places.

Such, in Fine, has been the Separation of divers other Sects, which, from time to time, have rent the Church by their Schisms, under vain and ridiculous pretences.

We have now seen, *Dearly Beloved Brethren*, what *St. Paul's* Doctrin was concerning the *Unity of the Church*. We shall see in another Letter, if it pleases the Lord, what has been both the Doctrin and practice of the primitive Church on that; and will examin, at the same time, of what Nature that Separation is, which parts your Church; whether it is Legitimate, or Unjust. In the mean time we shall pray to God, with Fervency, to return to it his peace. We are, in all sincerity, our Dearly Beloved Brethren,

A — Jan. 1.
1689.

Your most humble, and most obedient,
And most affectionate Brethren in the Lord,

The SECOND LETTER to the same.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

AT the latter end of our First Letter, we did engage to shew in this, what has been the Doctrin and the practice of the primitive Church, in regard of the point of Unity. To acquit our selves of our promise, we shall now say, That the Bishops of the First Ages had rightly apprehended the difference there is betwixt a lawful Separation, and an unjust; And that they believ'd conformably to *St. Paul*, That they ought to separate for Capital Errors, such as overturned the Foundation of Christian Religion; but that the Bonds of Communion were not to be broken, nor for indifferent Things, nor for slight Errors, nor for such practices which did not destroy the ground of piety.

Those holy Bishops did pronounce their *Anathema's* against the *Hereticks*, they would hold no Communion with them; but they did not separate themselves from

from their Collegues about Questions which concern'd not the Essence of Christianity.

St. Cyprian, for Example, had such an horror against Hereticks, that, far from having any Communion with them, while they persisted in their Heresie, he received them not to his Communion, when they converted themselves, but after he had Re-baptiz'd them. He pretended, that the Hereticks being out of the Church, they could have nothing in common with it, and that consequently they had no real Baptism. *If the Hereticks are in the Church, and embrace its Interests,* said he, in that Letter which he did write on that purpose to *Subianus*, *They may make use of its Baptism, and of the other Benefits that it has received: But if they are not in the Church, and that on the contrary they conspire against it, How can they baptize with the Church Baptism?* But, in the mean time, that great Man did not believe that he was to separate from such who in the same point were of another Opinion than he was, and who follow'd another practice than his, and he always remained united in Communion with them. *This is my* Ibid. *dearly beloved Brother,* said he to the same *Subianus*, who had consulted him on that point, *What we have thought we might answer you, according to our weakness; not that we pretend for this to prescribe any thing to any person, nor hinder any Bishops from doing what he shall judge fit, seeing he is Master of his actions. For, as far as in us lies, we shall have no dispute on that with our Collegues the Bishops, with whom we desire to live always in peace and unity, according to the Command of the Lord, &c.*

The great and holy Bishop did preserve that Spirit of Union and Peace, after he had been ill treated by *Stephen Bishop of Rome*. This had Excommunicated him, because of his Opinion concerning repeating the Baptism of Hereticks, as *Firmilianus Bishop of Cesarea*, who had seen the Letter which *Stephen* had writ on that Subject to St. Cyprian, says positively; and, as it seems, one might also infer so much from some of St. Cyprian's own words, or at least, he had threatned to excommunicate him, if he renounced not his Opinion, and his Practice, as some will have it. Yet thus St. Cyprian spoke to the other Bishops of *Africa* his Collegues, in a Council, which he had caused to assemble at *Carthage*, to examin that point. *What remains to be done,* said he to them, *is, that we speak our minds each of us on that point, condemning no body, and excommunicating no person, for that Subject, tho' he were of another Opinion: For none of us establishes himself the Bishop of Bishops, and pretends not to constrain Tyrannically his Collegues to obey.* In which words *Baronius* has rightly observ'd, that he spoke of *Stephen*, tho' he nam'd him not.

St. Cyprian did love Peace and Union with so much Fervency, he had such a detestation for Schism, that he confounded the Schismatics with the most abominable Hereticks, such as were the *Marcionites*, and the *Valentinians*. He did not only equally reject the Baptism of the one and the other, but he equally excluded them from Heaven, teaching that a person who died in Schism, could pretend to no share of Salvation no more than the Hereticks: A cruel Opinion, and which ill agreed with that Charity with which this holy Martyr was possessed.

Cyprian Ep. 72. ad Jub.

Epist. Firmil. ad Cypr. inter Epist. Cypr. Epist. 74.

Conc. Cart. de Bapt. Heret. in in Op. Cypr.

Bar. Ann. An. 250. §. 42.

But if that extreme Rigor is not to be approved of, with which St. Cyprian did condemn all *Schismatics* to Everlasting Fire; we must not, however, refuse him those praises which he has deserved, by that strong Inclination Aug. *Epist.* 48. which he has had for Unity. It is for that St. *Austin* praises him, in divers places of his Works, against the *Donatists*. He even maintains, that that Charity which St. Cyprian had shew'd in remaining in Unity with those that were not of his Opinion, had blotted out that Spot which he had contracted by his Error, conserving the Baptism of *Hetericks*, and of *Schismatics*.

It is true that St. *Austin* has stretch'd too far the Idea of Unity, as well as St. Cyprian, Excluding, like him, the *Schismatics* from Salvation. That hinders not but those praises which he allow'd to St. Cyprian's Inclination for Unity, were very justly grounded; and that they were both right, to recommend it with great Care, and to look on *Schism* as a most horrid Crime.

St. *Irenaeus* had been before them of the same Mind, as he express'd it, on the account of the Difference which was risen in the Church, on the Day in which the Feast of *Easter* was to be Observ'd: The Church of *Asia* did Celebrate it the same Day that the *Jews* did, namely the Fourteenth of the *Moon*; and the greatest part of the other Churches did Observe it but on the *Sunday*, as we Observe it still to this Day. On this Point, which was but a Point of Discipline, *Victor* Bishop of *Rome* did carry himself to that Extremity, to Excommunicate all the Churches of *Asia*, and those of the Neighbouring Provinces, because they refus'd to Conform themselves to the Practice of that of *Rome*. But St. *Irenaeus* being advertis'd thereof, Writ to him in the Name of the Bishops of the *Gauls*, a Letter of which *Eusebius* has preserv'd us some Fragments, in which after having declar'd, that he was of the same Mind with *Victor*; he Condemn'd his Passion with much liberty, and strangely represented to him, that for Questions of that Nature, the Bonds of Communion were not to be broken, nor the Peace of the Church to be disturb'd.

There were divers other Bishops which approv'd not of *Victor's* Design no more than St. *Irenaeus* did, and who Writ to him after the same manner that he had done, to Exhort him to Peace and Unity, and to Charity, towards his Neighbour.

But that which proves better yet, the Unanimous Consent of the Primitive Church in that Opinion, that no Separation was to be on slight Differences; are those Examples which were alledg'd by St. *Irenaeus*, in that same Letter to *Victor*, to shew him, his Conduct was opposite to what had always been practis'd in the Church; he represented to him, that there was not only Difference on the account of the Day on which the Feast of *Easter* was to be kept, but even also on the Form of the Fast which was to be Observ'd before that Feast; that some Believ'd they were not to fast but one Day only; others, that they were to fast Two Days; and some others, longer; that there were some, also which Fast'd full Forty Hours together, comprehending the Hours of the Night and of the Day. That this Difference of Customs in the Observation of that Fast was not produc'd in their Days;

that

that it had long since began amongst their Ancestors: But that however Peace had always been Observ'd, as it was still Preserv'd, in that respect. After this he Nam'd to *Vistor* divers of his Predecessors, whose Conducts had been effectually very different from his. He mention'd to him *Anicetus*, *Pius*, *Hygin*, *Telephorus*, and *Xistus*, all Bishops of *Rome*, who not keeping the Feast of *Easter*, on the same Day the Churches of *Asia* did, and even not permitting those who liv'd under their Ministry to Celebrate it that Day; did not however abstain from receiving into their Communion those Persons of those Churches which were at *Rome*; tho' they did Celebrate that Feast after their own manner, and that this was to appear the more strange, because it was done in the midst of a People which follow'd another Custom. And he added, that *St. Polycarpus*, Bishop of *Smyrna* in *Asia*, being gone to *Rome*, in *Anicetus's* time, tho' those Two Bishops had betwixt them some slight Differences on other accounts, they presently gave to one another mutually the Kiss of Peace; not much contesting on the point of the Day in which to Observe the *Easter* Feast; that they Communicated together, and that *Anicetus*, to Honour *Polycarpus*, would have this last to Consecrate the *Eucharist*. That in fine, they parted from one another in a perfect good Intelligence, preserving the Peace and the Communion of all the Church, notwithstanding the difference of their Customs.

Socrates, who relates the same History of the Dispute of *VI* for with the Churches of *Asia*, takes occasion from thence *Socr. Hist. Eccl. Lib. 5. Cap. 22.* to speak of divers Customs and Ceremonies which were observ'd in certain Churches, and which were not observ'd in others, or that were variously observ'd according to the diversity of places. He makes a long Enumeration of them, and observes that some of those particular Customs were of very Ancient standing. He says in general, that tho' the particular Churches had the same thoughts of God, they all had different Ceremonies; and that those who had one and the same Faith, had not the same Custom. And adds, That in that great diversity of Customs, and of Ceremonies, none being able to alledge any Precept from Scripture to support theirs; it shew'd the Apostles had left to every one the liberty to follow that which they lik'd best.

We can then say with assurance, That all the primitive Church have been of that mind, that the Bonds of Communion were not to be broken, nor for indifferent Points, nor for Opinions, nor Practices, which destroy'd not the Essence of Christianity; and that above all, there has been always allow'd a great liberty as to Customs and Ceremonies, of which the Scriptures make no mention.

If that from the first Ages there have been some Bishops of *Rome* who have disturb'd the peace of the Church for such like things, it was doubtless because that the Ambition and Pride which were to be one day the two Coloms of the Reign of Antichrist began to slide into their Chairs. But their Conduct was not approved of, and they were reprov'd for it by the Bishops their Collegues, as we have seen it in *Vistor*.

And if there was some other particular Schism, as that which was in the Church of *Antioch*, on the account of *Melchior*, with whom the other Bishops would have no Communion, all Orthodox, and all Confessor as he was, because he had received the Ordination *Ib. l. 2. c. 44.*

the *Arrians*. The reason was, that the Church at all times has had its defects, and its imperfections ; and that it has always been subject to those Disorders which might be caus'd by Men's particular Passions, or a mistaken Zeal, little enlightned. But after all, its general and common Practice has been to preserve the Peace and Union amongst its Members, notwithstanding the diversity of their Opinions, and of their Customs, in things which appertain'd not to the Essence of Christian Religion.

It is but since that time that Pride has got to its highest pitch, and that the *Roman Church* has put into her Head those pretended Privileges of its Infallibility, and Sovereign Authority ; that it has carried it self to that excess of Rashness, as to pronounce *Anathema* on all that never so little deviates from its Opinion, even in the less important things. Who could Read without Horror all those Vain *Anathema's*, which it has thrown forth in the Council of *Trent*, with as little Judgment as Charity ?

Let us leave, dearly beloved Brethren, that Proud Spouse of Antichrist, whose haughty Pride equals her Impurity ; let us leave her to spend in Vain her Thunders, without the least Discretion, and to throw them without distinction on those who Condemn her greatest Impieties, and on those that reject the least of her Ceremonies. As for us who are the Children of the Spouse of Christ, let us be Animated with his Spirit, which is a Spirit of Charity. If any one will Contest with us on things which touch not the Essence of Religion, let us

say with *St. Paul*, that *that is not our Custom, nor that of the Churches of God*. Let us bear in Charity with one anothers Weaknesses, in imitation of *Christ*, who *quenches not the smothering Flax, nor breaks the bruised Reed*. Let us not Condemn any one lightly, and let us always Live with our Brethren in perfect Union.

Give us leave, dearly beloved Brethren, to Ask you here, Why you Act otherwise in this ? That Doctrin which we have Establish'd, is that of the Primitive Church, and of the most Holy of its Bishops, of *St. Polycarpus*, of *St. Ignaceus*, of *St. Cyprian*, of *St. Austin*, and of an infinite number of others which we name not. It is that of *St. Paul*, it is even that of *Christ Jesus*. Why do you not follow it then ? Why are you Separated one from another ? Why Live you not all in one and the same Communion, as Brethren in one Family ? Why have you not the same Churches, the same Assemblies, the same Pastors ? Is it that you Accuse one another of having Ruin'd, Christian Truth ; or Christian Piety ? Is it that you mutually look on one another as Hereticks, or Idolaters ? God defend us from Taxing you with such thoughts.

You have all one and the same Faith, the same Sacraments, the same Hope, and the same Object of your Worship. You all acknowledg the same God for Father ; and the same *Christ Jesus* for your Saviour. You have all been Baptized with the same Baptism, and you all partake of the same Eucharist. You all Aspire to the same Heavenly Inheritance. You all Worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one only true God Sovereignly Adorable ; and you Adore but him alone. You have all equally Renounc'd Popery ; you all Condemn its Errors ; you all Abominate its Impieties ; and you have all the same Horror for his Tyranny.

You

You both retain Truth and Piety, and your Separation therefore cannot but be sinful. If there is any thing wanting to you, *our Dearly Beloved Brethren*, it is Charity, a mutual Support, and a Brotherly Union. Was it not for want of Charity, that the Sacred Bonds of Communion have been broken, on the account of a Form of Ecclesiastical Government, of Vestures and Ornaments, of Customs and Ceremonies, which cannot be consider'd by such as judge with equity of things, not necessary, nor as impious; in a word, on the account of the exterior part of Religion, which absolutely depends on Discipline? Were you for that to separate, to make particular Assemblies, to set up Altar against Altar, to rend in pieces not Christ his Coat, but his dear Spouse, his own Body?

We seek not here which of the two Parties has given occasion for this Separation, and which consequently is the most guilty: But we will tell you, with Freedom, *Dearly Beloved Brethren*, it is almost impossible but that there has been some defect on both sides. Those who separate themselves for indifferent things, or which at least are agreeing with the Ground of Religion, doubtless do violate Charity; and those who suffer such a Separation, rather than to renounce those same indifferent things, but are, however, scandalous to their Brethren, cannot deny but that they wrong it also. We can boldly say, that *St. Paul* has not done either the one or the other. He who *made himself all things to all*; and who protested, *that if flesh offended his brother, he would never eat flesh, for fear of offending him*, 1 Cor. ix. 22. *ib.* viii. 13.

We mention not those Persecutions which you have suffer'd of one another, they are Objects fit to be Bury'd in Eternal Oblivion, and that you ought to endeavour to blot out of your Memories. Let us leave what is pass'd, and let us think of Repairing by a Conduct quite different of that which we have hitherto kept, those Faults which we have committed, till this present.

We Conjure you, *Dearly Beloved Brethren*, by the Bowels of Compassions of God's Mercy, and by the Blood of Christ Jesus, to Reunite your selves at last in one Communion; seeing that notwithstanding your Separation, you are still United in one Faith, and in one Worship. Banish from amongst you the Words of *Conformists*, and of *Non-Conformists*; of *Episcopals*, and of *Presbyterians*. Cause those Odious Names to be forgotten, which are the Witnesses of your Schism; and Aspire all to attain and deserve the Glorious Name of Christians by an Union and Charity worthy the true Disciples of Christ Jesus.

Besides the General Motives which are drawn even from the very Foundation of Christianity, and from the Nature of the Church, and which we have touch'd upon in this Letter, and in the precedent; there are divers particular Reasons which ought powerfully to lead you to Reunion. They shall be, if God pleases, the Business of a Third Letter, which we propose to Write in some few Days.

Mean time we Wish to you that Grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are always with all our Hearts, Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,

Your most Humble and most Obedient Servants, and

most Affectionate Brothers, in Christ Jesus, N. N.

*A. the 24th of
Jan. 1689.*

C

T

The THIRD LETTER to the same.

Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,

VE shall not produce to you all the particulars which ought to oblige you to Reunite in one Communion, we shall only mention the chiefest of them, and of greatest force.

Shall it be necessary to tell you, That your Division has been ready to Ruin both Parties of you? You know this already. Have you not seen your selves on the very brink of Destruction? What great progress had Popery already done amongst you? You have seen that dangerous Enemy, who seemed not long since wholly suppress'd in *England*, begin to raise up his Head again; come out of that obscurity in which he had been lurking, attack you boldly, and promise to himself nothing less than an absolute Victory; and suddenly to raise his Trophies on the Ruins of your Religion, and all your Liberties.

An *English* Embassador was already Resident at *Rome*, and a Pope's Nuncio in *England*: A Jesuit was crept into the King's Privy-Council; who was the great Wheel of all the Actions of the Court. Ye were already divested of all your Employments and Offices, to adorn the Papists with them: And in their Hands were deposited, the Interests of the State, the Concerns of Religion, and all your particular Affairs; your Wealth, your Liberty, your Honour, and even your Lives. The Parliament was no more but a shadow. The Arch-Bishops, Bishops, and Inferior Clergy, could no longer do their Duties in safety: Either a Suspension, or a Prison, was the Reward of those who would be true to Christ. Mass was openly said in *London*, Chappels, Churches, and Monasteries, were were publicly Erected, where there resorted whole Swarms of Priests and Monks of all sorts. Declarations were Publish'd for the Subversion of your most Solemn and Sacred Laws, and to entirely Establish the *Roman* Religion. In short, if things had gone a little longer in the same Road, you might have bid farewell to *England's* Liberty, and to the Protestant Religion in that Kingdom.

Was not all that the fruit of your Division? Had your Enemies ever thought to attempt such things, if they had seen you firmly United? Durst they have undertaken it, though they had had such thoughts? But seeing you divided as you were, they imagin'd that it was easie to suppress you, and that they might attempt all things unpunish'd.

To that purpose they themselves did cast Oil into the Fire, which was but too much kindled already. Fully perswaded of this Oracle of Christ, That every Kingdom divided against it self is brought to nought, and every City or House divided against it self shall not stand, *Matth. xii. 25.* They fomented your Divisions with all their might, to get the means of destroying you more certainly, and with more ease.

What Springs did they not set in motion, what Arts did they not employ, to increase your Animosities? Sometimes they Courted the Bishops, and sometimes the Presbyterians, they flatter'd their Passions by turns. Sometimes they stir'd up the

the Bishops Zeal to the Conformity of the Publick Worship; and sometimes they inflam'd the Presbyterians Desires for Liberty of Conscience. They laid Bates for all, to infensibly engage them in the Court's Designs. Sometimes they urg'd on the Bishops to Persecute the Presbyterians; and sometimes again, they manag'd the tormented Minds of the Presbyterians in opposition to the Bishops. In a word, they omitted nothing to animate you more and more one against another, and to make you all concur to their own destruction.

Those Arts had succeeded so well with them, that they could undertake all things without danger; in truth they did attempt all, and under the shelter of your Divisions their Enterprizes had almost always their wish'd for success.

Already, from all parts, *England* was look'd upon as a Kingdom deprived of its Liberty, and not only submitted to an Arbitrary Power, and to an Absolute Authority, that is, to all the Humours of the King, and of his Council, but to the Tyranny of Popery also. All *Europe* was in a Maze at it. *Rome* and its Abettors were already preparing their solemn Rejoicing. The Reformed Churches did tremble at it, and beholding you on the Edg of the Precipice, they all fear'd being involv'd in your Ruin.

Is not this, our Dearly Beloved Brethren, a powerful Motive to lead you to Reunion and Peace? Your Divisions have been on the point of Destroying you: Ought you not then to Reunite your selves, for fear of falling once again in the like dangers?

When a Kingdom is divided into divers Factions, and that it tears it self in pieces with its own Hands, there is nothing more easie than to overcome it. It is the same with the Church while it is divided into Schism, her Enemies easily Triumph over her Weakness. And God on his part, to punish her for having oppress'd Charity, does abandon her to the Cruelty of her Enemies, and permits them to Rifle her. The Ancient Churches of *Africa* are Remarkable Examples of this. After the Schism of the *Donatists* had exerciz'd its Furies against them, during divers Ages, God at last deliver'd *Vist. Vir. deper.* up that Country to the *Vandals*, a Cruel and Barbarous Na. *Affie.* tion, infected with *Arrianism*, and permitted, that under their Cruelties, those poor Churches did suffer the most horrid Persecution unto which the Churches had ever been expos'd.

God has not dealt so with you, our Dearly Belov'd Brethren. He has not wholly abandon'd you to the Fury of Popery: But without laying on the Blow, he has been satisfied only to shew you the Rods, to let you see what you may fear from his Anger if you continue to Vex him by your Divisions. Flatter not your selves, *It is a Dreadful Thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God, Heb. x. 31.* And Christ tells you this Day, as he formerly said to the Church at *Ephesus*, *I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first Charity. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repeat and do the first Works, or else I will come against thee shortly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of its place, except thou amend, Revel. xi. 45.* Cast your Eyes on our Wasted Churches of *France*, see with what severity the Lord has treated them. They were not divided with Schism: Yet because they had abus'd Charity in divers other ways, and that they were not Converted at his Word; he has Visited them in his Just Vengeance, he

has taken from them his precious Candlestick, he has depriv'd them from the Ministry of his Word, he has reduced them to the extreamest Desolation. Fear, lest he should treat you with the same Rigour he has treated us; if you remain Impenitent as we were. You know that he spared not your Fathers, under the Reign of *Mary*: Have a Care lest he Punish you as he did them. He is ever infinitely Just: And we cannot shelter our selves from his Justice but by a serious Conversion.

To the Consideration of his Justice, join that of his Mercy. Reunite your selves, Dearly Beloved Brethren, to shew him your Gratitude for that Miraculous Deliverance which he has lately granted you, at the same time that you could not but think your selves lost, past all Redemption.

Represent to your selves *England* in the Condition she was but some Months since. She beheld on the Throne a Popish King, a great Zealot, who entirely abandon'd himself to the Will of a furious Jesuit, and of an Imprudent Council, both Bigot, and ill designing; on the other Hand, an Ambitious King, who impatiently bore with the just Limits the Laws set to his Authority; a Haughty King, Fearless, and Undertaking, who would be Obey'd in all things, and who found nothing difficult. It saw terrible Breaches made in its Laws, which are as the Bulwarks of its Liberty and Religion. It did see the Parliamentary Authority Annul'd, the Liberty of the Clergy oppress'd, the People divested of their Privileges. It did see Right and Justice over-turn'd in a Thousand ways, the Foundation of the Protestant Religion undermin'd, and the *Roman* Religion re-establish'd.

It beheld all his, and was forc'd to bear it. Of which side soever it cast its Eyes, it discover'd nothing from whence it could expect Relief, nothing but what foretold to it the last of Evils. On the one side Popery did grow Daily more fierce, and more dreadful, and puff'd up with those progresses which it had made of late, it endeavour'd Daily to go on. After it had Ruin'd the Reformed Churches of *France*, and of the Vallies of *Piemont*; it labour'd incessantly to Ruin the Reformation of all *Europe*. On the other side the Protestant Princes and States were not sufficiently United, and some of them had peradventure sufficiency of Zeal to undertake to resist those Attempts. And having seen the *French* Churches Perish before their Eyes, without making one Motion towards their preservation; it is probable, that they would let those of *England* perish also.

If in this Extremity in which *England* sees it self Reduc'd, it carries its thought to the future; if turning them towards the Princes and Princesses of the Royal Blood, flatters it self with the hopes, that a Change of Reign may produce some Change in the Government, and in the Affairs; that budding Hope will soon be Blasted. To go on with the Tragedy, there is brought on the Stage, by the means of divers Machines, a Prince of *Wales*, who tho' but a Child, does nevertheless Threaten it with an Eternal Slavery.

But who would have thought, that at the same Moment *England* was in that deplorable Condition, it touch'd with its Fingers-end the very instant of its Deliverance. Let us Worship, Dearly Beloved Brethren, with a profound Humility, that Wise Providence, which needs but to blow on the designs of Men, to
Reduce

Reduce them to Smoak; and which by a Thousand concealed Springs always conducts the Events to that very end, which it has propos'd; and which turns what it pleases to the good and advantage of its Church, the Direful Plots of its Enemies. Can it be doubted, but that this is the Finger of God? A Blow of Adorable Hand? *Exod. viii. 19.* Let us study well his Conduct, let us consider it with Attention, and we shall perceive, that long since his Providence had prepar'd these things to bring them to that point in which we see them.

Of the Generous Blood of *Nassau*, and of the Blood Royal of *England*, frames a Prince, who no sooner begins to appear in the World, but he draws him the Eyes and Admiration of all the Earth. He abundantly Enriches him with all the Virtues which make up a Christian, and an Hero. He places him in spite of all his Enemies at the Head of a Powerful Republick: But he places him there, at such a time, when that Republick is Harass'd with a War, almost overcome by the Arms of a potent Stranger; and he so Orders things that in a short time it owes to him its Safety and Deliverance. He gives him a Wife a Princess Worthy of him; a Princess who is one Day to succeed, both to the Crown of *England*, and to those of *Scotland* and *Ireland*.

England finding itself oppress'd, in the manner we have mention'd, do's cast eyes on that great Prince and Princess, whomake up all its consolation and its hope. They both concern themselves deeply in her Afflictions, especially in the Oppression under which they see the Protestant Religion, and they would gladly apply some Remedy to it. But the Consideration which they have for a King, to whom the Princess owes her Life, retains them; and causes that they are contented to represent to his Majesty, in a most respectful manner, the just Sorrow they have for what pass'd in *England*; and to make him some Propositions, tending to the Re-establishment of Quiet in his Kingdoms.

God permits that their Propositions are not so much as heard, and they are little consider'd, that to exclude them from the Succession, a pretended Prince of *Wales* is set up as an Heir to the Three Crowns.

That last Attempt, which Popery consider'd as the chief Master-piece of policy and prudence, and which, in effect, seem'd as if it would establish and confirm it in *England*, and there make it for ever triumph over the Protestant Religion, becomes, by a Miracle of Providence, the Rock against which all its Plots and Designs are dash'd in pieces.

The Prince perceiving they no longer kept any Measures, thinks himself oblig'd to observe none of his side. He sees that at the same time Three Kingdoms are taken from the Illustrious Princess, his Spouse; they make an end of oppressing, beyond all hopes, the Peoples Liberty, and the Protestant Religion. The Respect which he preserv'd till then for the King, yields at last to such great Considerations, that he resolves to run where Honour and Conscience call him. He frames a Design to go and relieve *England*; and that Commonwealth which we have mention'd, desirous to acknowledge, in some measure, those Obligations it owes him, lends him Ships and Forces to execute a Project so worthy of his great Soul.

God, who had design'd him for so great and glorious an Enterprize, that might succeed in it with more Ease, diverts those Obstacles which might oppo-

im. The King of *England* could expect no assistance but from the King of *France*, whose two Kings were strictly united in their Interest, they were mutually engag'd by a Treaty to act in Concert, to wholly extinguish the Protestant Religion in *Europe*, and, on the other hand, *Lewis XIV.* was no less an Enemy to the Prince, than a Friend to the King of *England*. But *France* having torn its own Bowels, having extremely weakned itself, by those Cruelties which it had exercis'd against the Reformed Religion, is not now so formidable as formerly. Its Neighbours no longer fear it, being resolv'd not to bear the Insultations which it continually made over them, they are united together for their common defence. It creates to itself Enemies all over the Earth. On the one side, a small Republick as a Watch over its Fleet, which might have been employ'd in opposing the Princes Designs; in lieu of which, it spends itself on the Coasts of *Africa*. On the other, an Elector of the Empire dyes, to draw upon its head all *Europe*. The Chapter, who has Right to name a Successor, is divided in the Election. Two Princes concur to the Electorship: The one is protect'd by the *French* King, the other by the Emperor, and the Pope. This causes some Disturbances, there are revocations on each side, Manifestos are published; at last it proceeds to an open Rupture, which sufficiently busies *France*; not to permit it to meddle with the Affairs of *England*.

Mean time, this Prince Embarks himself at the head of a powerful Fleet, he happily arrives in *England*, he is there received with a thousand Acclamations, and many Demonstrations of Joy. The Lords, the Magistrates, the Nobility, and the People, behold him all as their Deliverer; and they themselves lay open to him the Gates of Cities, instantly whole Counties declar'd for him. His Army continually increased, as fast as the King's Army wasted; and the King perceiving himself abandon'd by every Body, is forc'd to yield, and to cause the Convocation of a Free Parliament to be publish'd; and, not long after, absents himself, and seeks for a Retreat in *France*. Finally, the Heavens are so propitious to the Prince, that he executes his Enterprize with such an Ease, as it may be never had Example.

Where are those prophane persons that dare to deny Providence? Can they be blind, as not to see it act in this important Occasion?

Blessed be for ever the Almighty God, for having watch'd for you during your sleep; for having sav'd you, when all things seem'd to conspire your Ruin! What acknowledgments ought you to have, and to express to him for it! What thanksgiving ought you to render him! With what Zeal ought you to publish these wonderful Things which he has done for your Deliverance! With what Ardency, with what Devotion ought you to require of him, that he would himself finish at great Work which he has so happily began!

But to give him yet greater and more sensible marks of your just Acknowledgments, and oblige him to fix more and more in *England*, the Authority of the Laws, the Quiet and Liberty of the People, and the Protestant Religion; it is necessary, Dearly Beloved Brethren, that you hereafter avoid to displease and offend him; and that by your Conversation, you cause him to let fall from his hands those Rods which he had already taken up to chastise you. Turn to him therefore with all your hearts, and your Schism being, doubtless, one of those Sins which

which had the most contributed to the kindling of his Anger against you, reunited your Selves all together, and cause the external peace which you already begin to enjoy by his infinite mercy, to be accompanied with the inward peace of your Church. Thus did the *Eastern Churches* under the Emperor *Gallus*. They were divided by the Schism of the *Novatians*, and that Division continu'd so long as they were persecuted; but no sooner was the persecution ended, that they all reunited one with another, as we learn it by a Letter from *Demis Bishop of Alexandria*. Do the same at this present, while the Parliament shall labour in the Re-establishment of the Laws, of Justice, and of good Order in the State; labour all unaimously to re-establish the peace of the Sanctuary, and never grow weary, till you have effectually perform'd it. Give that Joy to the Church, which has groaned long since, to see itself torn by so many Schisms, and which cannot receive a greater Consolation in the midst of the persecution which she suffers from her Enemies, than to see all her Children reunited together in the Sacred Bonds of Charity and Peace. Your Reunion will be, perhaps, an Example of which God may make use to dispose all the Protestants in *Europe* to unite also in one Body, and in one Communion. What an happiness would it not be, if we could see not only in *England*, the *Presbyterians* reunited with the Bishops, but in *Germany* also, the *Lutherans* join'd to the Reformed; all the Protestants, in a word reunited one with another, making no longer but *one flock*, as they have all but *one Shepherd*. Then we might say with confidence, that God were entirely appeased with his Church, and that he were preparing himself to make her triumph over all her Enemies. May the Heavens let us see such happy days! But if the time of the general Peace of the Church is not yet come, may the God of Peace give in the mean time that Peace to the Church of *England*; and after he has given it may he preserve it to her throughout all Ages to the last Posterity. We are, with all our heart, Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,

A—Jan. 8.
1689.

Your most humble and most obedient Servants,
And most affectionate Brothers in Christ Jesus, N. N.

(The Fifth Letter to the Presbyterians of ENGLAND.)

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

THough in the Three Letters which we have writ to the Protestants of *England* in general We have alledged divers Reasons, which appear'd to us sufficiently strong, to bring you all to a Reunion, We yet have thought it would not be in vain to exhort you to it in particular.

That which we have to say, ought not to be suspected by you, in those Differences which you have with the Bishops, we wholly side with you; and that Discipline under which we live in *France*, is precisely the same which you would have establish'd in *England*. There was amongst us neither Archbishops, nor Bishops. There was no Subordination, nor Supremacy, amongst our Pastors; they all possess the same Ministry, in a perfect Equality. Their Habits were plain and modest, it was so with the publick Services of our Churches; there cannot be observ'd a greater Plainness, than that we observ'd in it. We had no magnificent Churches, Ornaments, nor Ceremonies. There could be nothing observ'd in our Assemblies of Piety, which relish'd of the vain Pomp of Popery: And we can say with Confidence, that either in our Sermons, in our Prayers, or in our ordinary Psalms; in the Administration of the Sacraments, or of Fasts, We had not retain'd the least shadow of *Roman Superstition*. This was not only our Practice, but we believe that such a Practice is most worthy of the plainness of the Gospel.

That Conformity which is betwixt your Sentiments and ours, gives us to hope, Dearly Beloved

brethren, that you will receive with favourable Dispositions, these Advices which we have to communicate to you, or, at least, that you will not take them in ill part; and, in this thought, we will give you our Opinions with a Brotherly Freedom.

We shall first Observe in general, that there is a real Schism in *England*. You live not there one with another under the same Ministry. You Assemble not in the same Churches. You partake not of the same Table; in a Word, you entertain not amongst you that Communion of the Saints, which should most strictly bind together all the Members of Christ Jesus's Body.

If you Liv'd in different Kingdoms, if you did not acknowledg the same Laws, or the same Sovereigns, it would not be strange you had not the same Ministry, or the same Ceremonies? And provided that according to occasions, you receiv'd one another Mutually to each others Communion; the difference of your Customs would not render you guilty of Schism. Thus did the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches formerly do, they kept a Communion one with another, notwithstanding their vast distance of place, and difference of Customs. Thus the *English* Church, and the Reformed Churches of *France*, had Communion also one with another, before the Ruin of this last. They had neither the Ecclesiastick Government, nor the same Ceremonies: Yet the *French* Protestants which were in *England* were receiv'd without any difficulty to the Communion of the *English* Church, and they made no Scruple on their part to Communicate with it. And the Members of the *English* Church which were in *France* were there receiv'd also to the Communion of the Reformed Churches, and they Scrupled not to Communicate with them.

But it is not the same between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterians. Ye all Live in the same Kingdom, in the same Cities, and sometimes in the same Houses, you all own the Sovereign Authority, the same Magistrates, the same Laws: In a Word, ye are United together by all the Ties of the Civil Society; yet you Form Two distinct Bodies, in regard of Religion; and if you say not to one another expressly *Anathema*, yet you have no Communion together. What can be call'd a Schism if that is not one?

We pretend not to step back to the Spring of this Schism, to discover which of the Two Churches, either the Episcopal, or the Presbyterian, is guilty. The Business is not to seek after the Sword, or the Arm that made the Wound, but to find out a Remedy, and to Cure it.

All *England* might be Reduc'd into One Communion by Three different Means. The First would be, That the Bishops would Divest themselves of their Dignities, and make themselves equal to the other Ministers; and that the Episcopal Church Renounc'd all that Exterior Shew which offends the Presbyterians, and that they wholly Conform'd to their Discipline. The Second, That the Presbyterian Church should Range it self under the Episcopal, and receive all the Customs and Ceremonies of the Episcopal Church, without any alteration. And the last, That both the Churches should Relinquish something each of their part, and draw near to one another. We must now Examine, by which of these Three ways we must endeavor to attain to a Reunion.

As to the First, There is no likelihood that it should be follow'd; and we shall not forbear to tell you, Our Dearly Beloved Brethren, that you would not be Reasonable, should you Require that the Episcopal Church

should wholly conform to the practice of the Presbyterians. Consider that the Episcopal Church has on her side Possession and the Laws; of one side she is generally received in all the Countreys, and in all the Cities of *England*, it possesses there all the Churches and all the Pulpits; and on the other it is not only the predominant Church, but the only established Church, and supported by the authority of the Laws. By what right could you pretend to disturb it in its possession? or to require, that to give you satisfaction, she should renounce freely all those Priviledges which she enjoys under so lawful an Authority? You ought to rest satisfied, that on the contrary, she has power to maintain her self in that possession in which she is, and which is authorised by the solemn Laws of the Kingdom.

But that you should not think we allow a too great authority to Possession and to the Laws over Religion, it is necessary we should clear to you our conceptions on that point.

First, we confess that as to the ground of Religion, neither Possession nor Laws are any thing to it, and that they can give no Right or Prerogatives to an Heretick or Idolatrous Church to remain in its Heresy or Idolatry. The Possession protects neither Error nor Crime, and the Humane Laws can no more authorise what the Divine Laws forbid. In vain did the *Roman* Church alledge her Possession to the Reformers; that Possession did not authorise her Errors nor her Superstitions; and in vain it is, that the Princes of her Communion pretend to authorise their Religion by their Laws: all those Laws have no force against those Divine Laws which condemn it. If therefore the Episcopal Church was Heretical or Idolatrous, she might alledge as long as she pleas'd the Possession and the Laws, she should not for that be the less obliged to renounce her errors or her impieties.

Secondly, as to what regards the external Discipline of the Church, we farther own two things; the one, that it can receive divers alterations, according to the variety of times, of places, and of occurrences: The other, that it belongs to the Church itself to make the regulation, rather than to the Sovereigns, in quality of Sovereigns.

But after this concession which we have made you, most on your part, Dearly beloved Brethren, agree with us in these following points.

The First is, that nothing is to be alter'd lightly in an already established Religion, not even in regard of the exterior; though the Regularities of Discipline are not perpetual; one ought not to touch them without great necessity. Such alterations may scandalize weak consciences; they are likewise subject to divers other inconveniences, at least when they cannot be made without noise.

The Second is, that one ought to avoid above all, as much as possible, to make any alteration in the outward part of Religion, when once it is authorised by Law; though it properly belongs to the Church rather than to the Sovereigns to regulate the Discipline, and the out-side of Religion, as we have already said, it is sometimes necessary, that the Sovereigns should meddle in it: and the Churches ought to have so much respect for those

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Powers to whom it has pleased God to subject it, as to religiously submit to their Laws, so long as they offend not the conscience, and that they are not contrary to this general precept of the Apostle, *That all things be done decently and with order*; 1 Cor. 12. 40.

The Third point is, that when the Sovereigns and the Subjects profess equally the true Religion, the Sovereigns have yet more right to meddle with the Regulation of the Discipline, than when they are of an other Religion than that of their Subjects. Then as they make the most considerable part of the Church, which God has gathered in their Kingdoms, their will and pleasure is highly to be regarded in such things as conserve the external part of Religion; and those Laws which they give in that respect, ought to be exactly observed.

In fine, it cannot be disputed to Sovereigns the Power of making such Laws as regulate the exterior part of Religion. When the Sovereign Authority, and the Legislative Power are either wholly, or in part in the hands of the People, then all the People are the more oblig'd to submit to those Laws, because they have made them themselves, or at least have had some share in the making of them. In this last case, the Laws are not only Ordinances of Sovereigns; they may be considered as Regulations of the Church also, or as Articles of a Confederation in which all the People are concern'd.

You easily judge our dearly beloved Brethren, that here we have *England* in view; every body knows that in effect, the People have a share in the Government: The Sovereign Authority, and the Legislative Power, resides there in three different subjects, namely, in the King, and in the Two Houses of Parliament; the one of which is composed of the Lords and Peers of the Realm, which are the principal Members of the State; and the other of the Deputies of all the People. It is then a Government in which Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy are mixed together, and the Laws are established in it, by the King, by the Lords, and the Commons jointly.

From all these Propositions these two conclusions are to be drawn; the First, that though Possession is not always a good Title in matters of Religion, it is so in the present case. There is no necessity of altering the whole face of the Church of *England*; that could not be done neither without great noise, and above all, it would be very dangerous to touch to the Ecclesiastical Government. The Second, that the Laws of *England* have a very lawful authority over the out-side of Religion, and that consequently you are not in right to require of the Bishops, that they should bring any alteration to a Government and Service that is authorized by its own Laws.

It would doubtless be more just, Dearly beloved Brethren, to follow the second way of re-union; that which we have observ'd on the first, ought to convince all rational Persons of it. We must say of the *Presbyterian* Church quite the contrary of what we have said of the *Episcopal*; the *Presbyterian* Church can alledge no Laws nor Possession; it is separated from that other Church, which has on its side both the Laws and Possession: and you know but too well, that the Laws, far from being favourable to your Church,

Church, are formally opposite to it, and that it cannot establish it self without violating them. Is she not then obliged to joyn her self to the Episcopal Church as a Member to the Body from which it has been separated, as a branch to the Body of the Tree whence it was torn off?

There are but three things that could be capable to justify your separation, if you could reproach either of them to the Bishops, and to their Church; the one would be Heresy in their Principles, the other Impiety in Worship, and the last Tyranny in Government.

As to Heresy and Impiety, we have sufficiently shew'd in our general Letters, that the one and the other give just causes of Separation; and we have confess'd to you heretofore, that if the Episcopal Church was guilty of this, neither Possession nor the Laws would give it right to maintain itself in its Errors nor in its false Worship, and that on the contrary she should be obliged to renounce them.

We will then be satisfied to say in a word, that if she was effectually either Heretical or Idolatrous and Impious, and that she should refuse to reform, though she had on her side Possession and the Laws, you could lawfully remain separate from her Communion: in such a case, you would cleave to the stock of the Tree, and she would be but a broken Bough torn from it.

Tyranny can also give occasion of a lawful Separation. If there was a Church which should retain all the essence of Christianity, either in the Faith or in the Worship, that should excommunicate the other Churches for slight differences betwixt them, and that would not receive to its Communion but those that would subscribe to certain Doctrins that were either false, or of small importance, and to be contested; one might doubtless remain most justly separated from such a Church: It would be she that would separate herself from the body, which she would pretend to separate others from.

That was *Firmilianus's* opinion, as he express'd it to St. Cyprian in a Letter which he wrote to him, on the difference which this last had with Stephen Bishop of Rome: *You have retracted your selves from the Communion, deceive not your selves*, said he in that Letter, addressing himself to Stephen; for added he, *he is really a Schismatick who breaks the Unity of the Church. Thus while you imagine you can separate others from you, you have alone separated your selves from all.*

It was also in the same Spirit that St. *Austine* said to *Crasconius* the Donatist, That if there were any Persons found should teach in publick Writings, that the action of the *Traditors* was to be imitated, that should suffer nobody in their Communion, but such as would approve of those Writings, they would separate themselves from the Unity of the Church.

According to this principle, if the Bishops should anathematise you, or if they would not admit you to their Communion, but on condition that you should say as some of them do, that *Episcopacy is of Divine Right*: It would be they that would separate from you, and that would properly be the Schismaticks.

You would remain lawfully separated from the Bishops, were they guilty of Heresy in their Doctrins, of Idolatry in their Worship, or of Tyranny in their Government. But can you, our dearly beloved Brethren, accuse them of any such thing? Have they perverted the Fundamental truths of Religion? Have they destroyed the Christian Piety by a Prophane and Impious Worship? Do they exercise a Tyrannical Authority in the Church? Do they Fulminate unjust Anathema's against you? Do they exact from you any Subscriptions to some Doctrins against your Consciences? Is it but on that condition that they will receive you to their Communion? If so, remain separate from them and their Church in good time; they have retrench'd themselves, and they are the right Schismatics: Neither Possession nor the Laws oblige you to hold Communion with them. But if you cannot make them any such reproach with the least appearance of Reason, if that their Faith is pure, and their Worship Evangelical; if they offer to you their Communion without exacting any thing from you, that can hurt your Conscience; if they demand nothing else of you but that you should submit to their Ministry, and that you should conform to their Ceremonies and Customs, what is it that can hinder you from reuniting with them?

You will say peradventure, that Episcopacy considered in itself, and the Ceremonies which are observed in the Episcopal Church, are things which you could not exteriorly receive, without offending your Conscience, because your heart cannot give its consent to it, no more than to that Doctrin, That Episcopacy is of Divine Right. Those are, you will add but remnants of Popery, unworthy the true Religion of Christ, and incompatible with the Purity and Simplicity of his Gospel.

But in the First place, there is a great difference in approving outwardly a Doctrin which one condemns in the heart, and in complying to some Practice of which one wholly approves not. The first is never allow'd of; that would be to betray ones own Conscience, and to render one self guilty of Hypocrisy, thus to approve without, what one condemns within. The Second is not only permitted in some certain occasions, it is an indispensable duty. We have shew'd in our general Letters, that not to break the Bond of Unity, and not to scandalize our Brethren, we are oblig'd to bear with their weakness, and to suit our selves to their practices, as Superstitious as they may be sometimes.

Secondly, if you had that thought That Episcopacy and the Episcopal Ceremonies of their Church, were incompatible with the true Religion, for that only reason, that they were Reliques of Popery; permit us to say, dearly beloved Brethren, that you would be highly deceived. Look on all that outside, if you please, of the *English Church*, that you approve not of; as a remnant of the furniture of the Prostitute *Babylon*; we shall freely joyn with you in it: but take notice at the same time, that they are Ornaments that are not wholly unworthy of the chaste Spouse of Christ. Had not the Church employ'd them before the coming of Antichrist? And why then might he not make use of them still at this time? If for example, Episcopacy is no Apostolick

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institution, as we are perswaded it is not, can it be denyed but that it is at least very antient? Was it not established in St. *Austin's* days? and in those of St. *Chrysostom*, of St. *Athanasius*, of St. *Ambrose*, of St. *Cyprian*. &c. Was it not established in such Ages, in which the Church had not yet lost its Purity, even in those Ages that were nearest to the Apostles?

It is certain that Episcopacy has been as a Staff by which Tyranny has raised itself in the Church. But withal, it being deprived of all which Popery had added of Tyrannick and Impure, as it has been in *England*, may it not then be us'd very advantageously, though the Church of *Rome* has made use of it?

We must reason after the same manner about the Ceremonies, and all the other Customs observ'd in the Church of *England*, even of those that may have been hatch'd in the bosom of the Church of *Rome*; they should not be cast away for that only reason, that the Church of *Rome* has made use of them: Could not a good use be made of that which she has employ'd about her Superstitions? much after the same manner that *Moses* employed the Gold of *Egypt*, to the construction and ornament of the Tabernacle. Know you not that, *Unto the Pure all things are pure*; whereas, *unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure*, as says St. Paul? Tit. i. 15.

In a word, if the Christian Religion could not bare with Episcopacy, nor with the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, because the Papists had once made use of them, or did still use them at present; We should forbear the use of Pulpits, of Churches, and of Assemblies; in fine, of all that we have in common with the Church of *Rome*. That was St. *Cyprian's* reasoning, when it was alledged to him, that *Novatianus* rebaptized as well as he did; *What Reason is that*, said that Holy Bishop, *that because Novatianus has the confidence to rebaptize, we ought not to do so? We must also then decline our Pulpit, because Novatianus Usurps the honour of the Sacerdotal Seat: And because he strives to erect an Altar, and to offer Sacrifices, we must forsake the Altar and the Sacrifices, for fear it should be thought we imitated him.* exp. Epist. 72. ad Juh.

It must be concluded from all we have said hitherto, Dearly beloved Brethren, that in Rigour the Bishops should not be obliged to change any thing in their Discipline, either as to the Ministry, or as to the Ceremonies and the Publick Service to reunite to us; and that on the contrary you should be obliged to reunite to the Episcopal Church, such as it is, and without any alterations made to it. But we acknowledge, that if the Bishops did stand to that, and that they would not yield something for the sake of Peace; such a Proceeding would suit very ill with Charity, which will have us to bear with one another; and that we even Sacrifice to the Peace of the Church, and to the Edification of our Brethren, that freedom which the Gospel affords us.

We then believe, that it must be by the third way, that you are to reunite one with another, that is, by releasing something on both sides by a mutual concession, ye ought to draw near to one another; so that you may all live in one Communion.

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That which makes us hope, that you may reunite by this last means, is that we know that the Bishops are disposed to follow it; they are in a design to sacrifice to an Union some of their Opinions and Customs, and even to retrench of their Publick Service, all that shall be thought would scandalize weak Consciences.

On your part, our Dearly beloved Brethren, be ye possess'd with a Spirit of Charity and Peace, and be not too difficult to please; receive without scruple such Customs and Ceremonies, which alter not the ground of Religion, and of which a good use may be made; and make no difficulty to reunite your selves with the Bishops, and to submit your selves to their Ministry.

When will you do it, if not at this time, that the *English* Clergy is filled with so great a number of Prelates, of so great merits? of Prelates equally illustrious by their Learning and by their Virtue, whose Piety, Zeal and Charity cannot be too much prais'd: in a word, of Prelates worthy of the time of the Apostles.

You formerly suspected them of not being good Protestants, and of favouring Popery; that was at least the pretence by which some of you us'd to justify your Separation. What an injustice was that? Have you seen, when Popery was effectually to be introduced in *England*, that they made the least step to favour that design? Have you perceiv'd that they gave an helping hand by a base complaisancy? Have you not seen them on the contrary, to oppose it with an Apostolick Vigour and Zeal, without any reserve for the King, nor regard to their own Liberties, nor to all their particular Interests? Now therefore that those unjust Suspitions which you had conceiv'd against them, ought to be entirely blotted out of your minds; re-unite your selves with them, and refuse no longer to acknowledge them for your Ministers.

We have not forgot, that under the Reign of *Charles* the Second, they treated you with great severity; that is, what you can reproach to them with great justice; and we doubt not but that some resentments of it still remain in your hearts. We can on this account tell you in Conscience, Dearly beloved Brethren, that we have always shar'd much in your troubles, and that we have beheld with a sensible sorrow all those Persecutions which you have suffered from the Episcopal Church. But you ought to impute those Persecutions, either to the arts of a Court, which had already a great tendency for Popery; or to an excessive Zeal which the Bishops had for Unity, rather than to any sentiments of aversion or of hatred, which they had against you. And however, ought we not to forget the Injuries we have receiv'd from our Brethren? Must we entertain perpetual resentments of them, contrary to so many express Commandments which the Lord has made to forgive one another? Must you by way of revenge run to your own ruin, and even endeavour the destruction of the Protestant Religion?

It may be said, Dearly beloved Brethren, that a resentment had carried some of you so far, and it was no want of will in them, that they lost not themselves, together with the Religion of *England*. What other thing might
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be expected, if we judge according to all appearance, from those Addresses which you went in throngs to present to the King, to return him thanks for the Declaration which he had put forth concerning Liberty of Conscience? Was not that openly to approve of the re-establishment of Popery, and to authorise your Enemies to subvert all your Laws, and to destroy, when they pleas'd, you and your Religion? Those were in effect the fruits which they hop'd, together from those Thanksgivings which they so earnestly solicited. Blessed be God who has confounded their prudence, and destroyed all their devices.

For your parts, never forget the sorrowful effects which your Division was the point to bring on you, and which it had infallibly produced, if God had not had mercy on you. Let those thoughts inspire in you vehement desires for peace, and make you to pass over all obstacles that might oppose themselves to it. Fear lest God should grow weary with supporting you, and that after he has threatned you, he punish you at last severely for your Separation.

It seems as if after the miraculous successes which he has given to the enterprise of your illustrious and Glorious Liberator, you had now nothing more to fear from your Enemies. But lull not your selves asleep with that; that great God has yet a thousand ways to destroy you; and there could be no man nor Angel that could shelter you from his Justice, if he had once resolv'd to display it against you. Would you then be for ever assured of his Protection, and establish on everlasting foundations that Peace which he has newly restor'd to England? First, Re-establish your selves the Peace of the Church, and re-unite your selves with the Bishops; that according to the example of the Primitive Christians, ye may be no longer all, *but one heart and one soul*, Acts 4. 32. That is what we wish you, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. We are very sincerely, Our Dearly beloved Brethren,

A— Jan. 12th.
1685.

Your most Humble, and most Obedient Servants,

and most Affectionate Brethren in Christ Jesus.

N. N.

THE FIFTH L E T T E R.

To the Arch-bishops and Bishops of the Church of England.

My Lords,

IF the Letters we have writ to the Protestants of the Church of England in general, do fall into your hands, you may be at first surprized to find them from Strangers, and chiefly from unknown Persons, who endeavour to concern themselves with your Differences; yet we do not fear you will take ill, when you shall find that these Letters relate to nothing else, but to re-establish Peace in the Bosom of your Church. We likewise hope, that you will not be displeased that at the same time we write to our Presbyterian Brethren, to exhort them to re-unite themselves with you. We give our selves the freedom to write to you in particular, to conjure you to facilitate this reunion, as much as possibly you can. The Rank you hold in the Church of England, and the holy Charge you execute so worthily, does on the one part lay on you an obligation to labour on this Design, with all the care you are capable of, and to give you on the other part, the means to work it most profitably.

My Lords, You know it is the end of the holy Evangelick Ministry, to assemble into one Body all the Members of Jesus Christ. St. Paul expressly teaches us, when he has said, that God has given some to be Apostles, others to be Propets, and others to be Evangelists; and some to be Pastors and Teachers: He insists, that it is to that end they should labour for the union of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, and for the Edification of the Body of Christ. The Evangelick Pastors are the Ministers of the Holy Saviour, who is the Prince of Peace; they ought to be themselves Ambassadors of Peace. They are the Pastors of his Flock, they ought
Ista. 9. 5. then according to the example of the Prince of Pastors to run after
1 Pet. 4. their stray'd Sheep, to bring them into their Sheepfold.

My Lords, what grief ought you to express, to behold so great a number of the Dear flock of the Lord, of those also who ought to feed under your Sheep-Hooks, separated from the great body of your Flock, to refuse to hearken to your voice, and to follow you! We are perswaded that you sigh night and day before God, and that you continually send up your Vows to Heaven to re-establish Peace, that lovely Daughter of Heaven, in the midst of yor.

But my Lords, you must not stay there, nor must you be contented to make Vows for Peace; you must contribute all your Power, knowing, that Blessed are they who procure Peace, because *they shall be called the Children of God, Mat. 5. 9.*

We know what respect the Clergy owes you; you are as the Soul of that great and illustrious Body, inspire that Body more and more with Love and Peace, to which it is already inclined of itself: Do the same thing for respect of all the People who live under your Ministry. You are their Leaders, guide them in the way of Peace; make them understand, that our offerings cannot be acceptable to God, till we be reconciled to our Brethren.

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Above all, my Lords, forget nothing to gain the Presbyterians Hearts; it is not by the spirit of Faction, and of Schism they are separated from you, but out of a great detestation of Popery, and out of a zeal for the Reformation: They cannot endure an out-side of Religion, which does not appear to them sufficiently Evangelical: They have looked on your Reformation as imperfect, while your Church keeps a remnant of likeness with the Church of Rome; and not considering that that for which they blame the Church of England, was in effect but the outside, and did not relate to the Principles of Christianity: They thought themselves obliged to separate from it, and to make their assemblies a-part. It is true, they have gone too far, and they never ought to have run it to a Rupture; but as they have been induced by a good motive, they deserve to have some Charity and Support allowed them, and to endeavour to recall them with all kind of mildness.

The Rigour that has been used to them hitherto, served only to separate them farther from you: It is not by this way you may gain their Hearts and Minds; for the Severity of the Laws which the Emperours used against the *Donatists*, nor all the persecutions they made them suffer, had never the power to re-unite them in the Communion of the Catholick Church: On the contrary, finding themselves reduced to the last extremity by the Catholicks, they persevered in their opinions, to their utmost extremities.

We must likewise affirm, that when by the Rigour of the Laws, and Punishments, one should force the *Schismatics* to be joined with the rest of the Church; one ought not to use such means for fear of making Hypocrites: It was the opinion of Saint *Augustin*, before the necessity in which he found himself to defend the conduct of the Catholicks, against the *Donatists* complaints, made him to take their part, to maintain, that we might justly persecute the *Hetericks* and *Schismatics*. I was (says he) formerly of this opinion, that we ought not to compel a man to be reconciled to the Church; but rather to employ our words to dispute, and to overcome by Reason, for fear to have false Catholicks, &c.

August. Epist. 48. ad Vincul.

It was that, which a right Understanding and true Piety inspired that great Bishop with, while he reasoned deliberately, and without passion; and we doubt not, My Lords, but that you are of the same opinion: No, it is only by the Word, by Exhortations, and by Reasons, that we ought to labour to bring them into our Communion who are separated; it is only by such ways as Jesus Christ and his Apostles did bring into the Church Jews and Gentiles; they never, to bring them over to them, imposed the Laws of Sovereigns, nor used the severity of punishments. The Apostle Saint *Paul* has declared to us, that those carnal Weapons, as he calls them, are not those the Lord has put into the hands of the Ministers of the Gospel: Therefore treat the Presbyterians with that tenderness which is so worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Draw them into your Communion by the Bonds of Love, and Charity; and make them to lay aside, by your Moderation, that Hatred they have conceived against your

*Eph. the IV.
1st, & follow-
ing verses.*

Church: It is by this you will practise that excellent Exhortation of Saint Paul, *I pray you, I who am a Prisoner in the Lord, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation to which ye are called, with all humbleness of Mind, and meekness, with long suffering, supporting one, another through Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

But to make an entire conquest of our Brethren, who are separated from you, you must not only support their weakness with Charity, but likewise comply with them, as Saint Paul says; *Being free from all men, yet have I made my self Servant to all men, that I may win the more: To the Jews I become as a Jew, that I may win the Jews. To those who are under the Law, as though I were under the Law, that I may win them who are under the Law: To them who are without Law, as if I were without Law, when I am not without Law as pertaining to God, but am in the Law through Christ; that I may win them who are without Law: To the weak I become as Weak, that I may win the Weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some: Which implies, My Lords, that it is very requisite that you relinquish something in your Opinions, and in your Customs; and that you comply and suit your selves to the Weakness of the Presbyterians, to oblige them to be united to you. We are bold to tell you our thoughts on this, with that respect due to you; it seems to us that that opinion, that Episcopacy, as it is establish'd in your Church, is of Divine Right; and that Custom which is observed among you to confer a new Ordination on Pastors, who have been received by other Pastors, are things that ought to be sacrificed to Peace.*

We do not pretend here to enter into dispute with you; we only beg of you to reflect a little upon a tenable consequence, which may be justly drawn from the opinion we have newly mentioned. If Episcopacy is of Divine Right, it follows from hence, that neither the Churches of *France*, nor those of *Holland*, nor those of *Germany*, nor those of *Switzerland*, nor *Geneva*, &c. have truly had neither Ministers, nor Sacraments since the Reformation: And would you My Lords, shut up the Ministry of the Gospel, and the Sacraments of Jesus Christ in the Church of *England* only; and to look on the other Reformed Churches, as Churches without Ministers, and Sacraments? What a trouble would it be for that great number of Churches, who have forsaken Popery as you have, and who profess the same Faith, and have the same Worship as you, to find you in this Belief? And would not that be an obstacle to re-unite the Presbyterians to your Church?

If you renounce this opinion, that Episcopacy is of Divine Right, you must at the same time revoke the Custom of Re-ordination, which is but a dependence on it: You cannot imagine how many good Souls find themselves scandalized at this Custom; that has been chiefly a very great trouble to the French Ministers, who are dispersed every where to be obliged to receive a second Ordination from your hands, before they are able to execute their Office in the Church of *England*; for we must sincerely tell you, that we know many persons, whom this very consideration have dissuaded to retire into *England*.

In case there should be any thing else found in your Customs, in your Ceremonies, in your Prayers, and lastly in your public Service, which may be a scandal to

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weak Persons, it were very well if they were retrenched to smooth the ways of Peace; and take away all obstacles that may hinder the Presbyterians to enter into your Communion.

My Lords, We beg your pardon for that Liberty with which we speak to you; for we are not ignorant that it is from you we must learn our Duty, rather than concern our selves to prescribe yours. But we have so earnest a desire to see Peace and Union in your Church, that it makes us to pass beyond those Limits which we should inviolably observe on any occasion but this.

We also flatter our selves with this belief, that this liberty we take will not be disagreeable to you; you love Peace, you are disposed to doe all that shall belong to you, to re-establish the Church of *England*; nor do we propose any thing, but what you would doe of your selves in favour of a Re-union.

My Lords, What a worthy Disposition is this of true Bishops, and of true Ministers of Jesus Christ, in one word worthy of you; you show by that, that you are truly endued with the same Spirit, as were the Great and Holy Bishops of the Primitive Church, who had so great a zeal for Unity: You follow the ways of Saint *Paul*, who had so great a Condescension for all kind of Persons: You imitate the Charity of Saint *John*, the beloved Disciple of Jesus Christ, of that Disciple whom the Antients called the Apostle of Charity, because he was thoroughly imbued with that admirable Vertue, there being nothing he had recommended to the faithfull with so much care. My Lords, Signalize on this occasion that passionate Love which inflames you, as you have highly signalized of late your zeal for your Country, and for Religion. The whole Church has beheld, with wonder, the greatness of courage you have shown in this most critical, and most important conjuncture, that, it may be, has ever been seen; you have most worthily supported your Character, in spite of all menaces and punishments that threatned to shake you; you have been faithfull to your King, and you have exactly obeyed his Commands, while you could doe it without wounding your Consciences: But he no sooner required things contrary *As. 4th* to the Duty you owed to God, but you, remembering that it is more just *19th &* to obey God than Men, you had no more to doe with a King, from whose *20th* anger you ought to fear every thing, when he would set up Popery in *England*, in defiance of the most solemn Laws of the Kingdom: You opposed him openly with the hazard of all that was most dear to you: You generously sacrificed all your Temporal concerns for the interest of Religion, and your Country; and we may say, that by your Resolution and Zeal, and by the Imprisonment that some of you suffered, with so much Constancy, you saved one and the other from utter Ruine.

It is with the same Courage, as formerly we beheld Saint *Ambrose* resist the Emperour *Valentinian* the Second, and the Empress *Justina* his Mother, when they would have set up *Arianism* in *Milan*, in the ruins of the Catholick Religion: My Lords, how brave and glorious is it for you to tread in the path of this great and generous Prelate.

We can add nothing more to your Glory, than for you to settle an inward Peace in the Church of *England*, after you were so highly instrumental in the

outward Peace; there remains nothing but that, to crown your Conduct, and to render your Names Immortal: Your memory shall be for ever blessed in the Church, and when the Prince of Pastors shall appear, you shall receive from his hands the incorruptible Crown of Glory. In the mean time, may the Sovereign Pastor more and more bless your Persons, and your Ministry, and your Church: These are the vows which zealously fly to Heaven, from,

My Lords,

Your Most Humble,

and Most Obedient Servants,

N. N.

January the
12th, 1689.

The Sixth Letter. To the Lords and Commons of England.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

WE have formerly writ many Letters into *England*, and we are now writing others thither, to endeavour to dispose their minds to Peace, and to a Re-union under the same Ministry, but we should believe we had omitted the principal, if we did not address our selves to you in a particular Letter. We know not at what time, nor after what manner you will assemble your selves; the King having revoked, before his flight, the orders he had given to call a Free Parliament; but whatsoever it be, we hope you will be shortly assembled, if ye are not already: And we are persuaded, that it would be in vain to endeavour to re-unite all the Protestants in *England* into one Body, if you do not concern your selves, and if at the same time you break not the Ice to this great Affair, by your Authority and Wisdom.

My Lords and Gentlemen, We know you have before you an infinite number of other Affairs of the last importance, and capable to wholly take up your concerns. The Desertion of *Britain's* Majesty did put *England* into a kind of *Interregnum*, in which time you underwent all the Affairs of State, with your Great and Glorious Deliverer; and this *Interregnum* following an Unjust and Tyrannick Government, which left all in confusion, it is for you to settle all things in a right order, where they are to move.

My Lords and Gentlemen, It is that which all *England* expects from you, that you declare who are the Lawfull Heirs to the Crown, and keeping it for them who claim it by Birth-right; you will for ever put it out of all dispute to let it fall to Strangers, or to those who had Plotted that black and abominable design. The Kingdom expects from you to re-establish the Laws, which have been almost wholly ruined; to keep their Liberties and Privileges, which they endeavoured to infringe, and to settle her in quiet, which she saw was troubled by wicked and disaffected Persons.

My Lords and Gentlemen, Answer this so great expectation : God forbid, that we should think you should neglect it : Be you the Restorers of the Laws, and Liberties of the People ; the Support and Prop of the safety of the Kingdom. In a word, Be you the Fathers of *England*, and to establish there a Peace and Eternal Happiness, preserve the Crown faithfully for the right Blood of her Kings, and discover to all the world the Infamous and horrid Designs that were practis'd to force it from her.

But as you are concerned to labour for the welfare of the Kingdom, so you are not to forget the Interests of the Church : She deserves so well of you, that you allow her a part of your Cares : *She is the Spouse of the Son of God* : She the Mother who has begot you for *Jesus Christ* ; and by this New Birth you have acquired, you are become her Children, and the Heirs of the *King of Kings*.

This good Mother, to whom you have such high obligations, My Lords and Gentlemen, groans to see her self not only persecuted by her Enemies, but afflicted by her own Children ; she bewails to see her Liberties abolish'd, her Sanctuaries demolished, her Ministers exil'd, her Flocks despersed and expos'd to an infinite number of Torments and Deaths ; but that which increases most her sorrow, are those Divisions which reign in her bosome, in lieu of Unity and Peace, which ought to flourish there in all seasons.

Endeavour to dry up her tears, My Lords and Gentlemen : Comfort those of her Children which the *French* Persecution has forc'd to seek for shelter among you : Make them to feel in their greatest Misery the extraordinary effects of your Charity : Seek out the means of procuring her a Calm, in those places where she is beaten and toss'd by the storm of Persecution. Cause, in *England* at least, that she may enjoy, under the shelter of your Authority, a profound Peace, and a firm and established Quiet ; and at the same time, that your Law shall protect her from the fury of her Enemies, give her farther, the comfort of seeing an end to all those Divisions with which she is afflicted.

But remember, My Lords and Gentlemen, to employ to the execution of this great Design but legitimate Means. As great, and far extended as is your Authority, it would outgo its lawfull bounds, should you employ the severity of the Laws, and the Terror of Penalties, in re-uniting to the Body of your Church, those that are separated from it. The Power over Consciences, belongs to God alone, he has reserv'd that Authority to himself : And it is encroaching his Rights, it is making an attempt against his Sovereign Authority, to give Laws to Consciences.

That which we have said, My Lords and Gentlemen, ties not up your hands as to Popery. That is the never to be reconciled Enemy, not only of Christ and of his Church, but of Sovereigns, and of Protestant States also. It is the Plague, not only of Religion, but of the Civil Society also : Against it therefore you may let loose justly, all the Vigour of the Laws : True Policy allows not of it in any State which God has freed from its Tyranny. That is not to give Laws to Consciences, that is to rid one's self from a Publick Enemy : It is to provide for the safety of the Religion, and of the State. Yet, if there were

ny *Papists* found, who against the Maxims and Practices of their Church, would live amongst you like good honest Citizens, and in that subjection which is due to the Laws, they doubtless ought not to be banished out of their own Country, nor divested of their Means, nor persecuted in any wise. It would be unjust to exercise such violences against them, under pretence they were a far other Religion than yours.

But as to that which concerns the *Presbyterians*, who are together good Citizens and good Protestants, and who are separated from the Episcopal Church, out through an Over-zeal for Reformation, it seems to us, that far from making new Laws against them, it were fit, on the contrary, to abolish the old Ones; that it should not only be permitted them to live in Peace and without molestation in their Houses, but to give them likewise a sufficient Liberty of Conscience, to calm their disturbed minds, fretted by the ill usages which they have formerly received, and to dispose them to re-unite themselves with the Bishops.

Might you not also, My Lords and Gentlemen, Make choice of some of the wisest and most moderate Persons of your Houses, to labour in this Re-union under our Authority and your Orders? Such Commissioners would be very proper, to find out expedients, to propose them, to level the difficult Obstacles, to manage the minds, and finally to inspire to both Parties thoughts full of Charity and of Peace.

But what do we do? We seem to set down to you what you your selves are doing, as if the most Enlightned, the Wisest, and the most Honourable Assembly in the World had need of our weak and dim lights; and that our Counsels could be of any use to it. No, My Lords and Gentlemen, that is not our thought. We have no other design, than to discover to you, with all the respect which we owe you, the vehement passion we have for the Re-union of the whole Church of England in one Body. It is your parts to re-establish Peace in it, by such means as your Prudence shall inspire you. Permit your selves to be guided not by your Piety and by your Zeal; and by that experienced Wisdom, which usually rules your deliberations, and God will conclude, if he pleases, that great Work: He will open you the way of Peace, and he will give an happy success to those Cares you shall bring, to re-establish it in your Church.

We earnestly beseech him, My Lords and Gentlemen, that he shower his powerfull Blessings on all the just designs of your Assembly; that he preside there with his Holy Spirit, that he enlighten it with his Understanding, and that he inspire it withall, that it shall have occasion to resolve for the Good of the State, and Religion. We are, with a profound respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

*Your most Humble, and
most Obedient Servants;*

Jan. 12th
1681.

*The Seventh Letter. To his Highness, the Prince of Orange.**My Lord,*

IF the Subject of which we are to entertain *your Highness*, was not extremely important; We should not undertake to deprive, by this Letter, *your* great Concerns, from any of those precious Moments which you employ in so useful and so glorious a manner: But in the design we have to contribute all that we can possible to the Re-union of all the Protestants of *England*, in one Body of a Church, and under one Ministry; we should fail in our Duties, if we did not flie to *Your Highness*, who is only capable to put the last hand to this Work, whence the Protestant Religion would draw such considerable advantages.

Is it not from *Your Highness*, *My Lord*, that we have reason to expect the performance of that great Design from You, in whose hands the most difficult enterprizes become easie from you, whose Piety is known over all *Europe*; from you in fine, to whom the Church of *England* owes already her Preservation and Deliverance; and to whom it seems, that God has reserv'd the Glory to be the Prop, and the Liberator of the whole Reformed Church?

The whole Earth sees, *My Lord*, that *Your Highness*, is born for Great things. No Body is ignorant that, almost at your stepping out of Infancy, and at your very first bearing of Arms, You sav'd *Holland*, by unheard of Miracles of Courage and Prudence; That You did tear it out of the hands of a Triumphant Monarch, who at the head of his Armies had already carried off a great part of it; and who, puff'd up with his Victories, did look on it wholly as the Prey of his Ambition.

That great Exploit was not yet forgot, *My Lord*, when *Your Highness* was seen to undertake and to put in execution something more surprizing yet and more difficult; when you were seen to flie at the relief of *England*, which began to groan under a Tyrannical Government, and under the power of Popery; and to deliver it from that cruel Oppression, with a diligence and ease which borders on Prodiges.

It belongs to the Princes of your Name, *My Lord*, to immortalise their Memory, by Exploits of this Nature. The State of the United Provinces, freed from the Yoke of *Spain*, and from the Tyranny of *Rome*, shall be an Eternal Monument of the Glory of the House of *Nassau*. But we may say, that what *Your Highness* has done, in favour of *England*, concludes the Crowning of that Princely great House, with a Ray of Glory, which all the Great and Immortal Actions of your Ancestors had not given it.

Yes, *My Lord*, that which shall astonish the future Ages, after it has made the admiration of ours, is that wonderfull Conjunction which is to be observed in *Your Highness's* Person, of the Heroes Vertues, with those of the Christian; of the Military and Politick Vertues, with those that are Evangelical; of Courage, Valour, Ability, and Prudence; with Piety, and Zeal for Religion.

It is, above all, *My Lord*, to *Your Highness's* Zeal, that that immense praise is to be attributed, which you have lately performed with your Fortune, and so much Glory. It is your Zeal, which push'd

...and even your Life, to *England's* safety; and to support its tottering Pillars through the greatest Perils of Sea and Land. It is your Zeal, in which has preserv'd there at the same time both Religion and the State, from an inevitable Ruine, of which they both were equally threatned.

My Lord to give such remarkable proofs of that Zeal with which *England* finds your self animated. The Eyes of the whole Church are fix'd on You.

She looks on You from the midst of those Persecutions she suffers, as her Deliverer and Restorer; as a Tutelary Angel which God has sent her, in a special manner, to have her not your Protection; make her to breath again under the shadow of your Palm, and of your Lawrell. Heal those profound wounds, which she has receiv'd from her most cruel Persecutors; and cause her to beat peace all round her, as you have done in *England*.

My Lord, the Internal Peace of the Church of *England*, to that Extent, that it cover you, smother all those Divisions which disturb her; re-duce this single Body, all the Divers Members of which she is compos'd, but which are unfortunately separated one from another. Your *Highness* shall no sooner know your desire for that Re-union; but they will all strive who will be first, to satisfy your just desires, and to shew you what a respectful de-ference they have for you.

What can one refuse to such a Prince as is Your *Highness*? To a great and illustrious Prince, by a birth which yields nothing to that of the greatest Monarchs; but much more Great and Illustrious yet, by that innumerable number of Vertues, with which God has adorn'd You? What could *England*, above all, refuse to a Prince of the blood of her Kings, who is himself so worthy of the Throne, and to whom he has such great Obligations?

My Lord, that Your *Highness* is desirous to take some care to cause the Union of the Protestants of the Kingdom to succeed; God will be pleas'd to bless it, as he has done hitherto on your other Enterprises; and will surely give us the Consolation to see the whole English Church gathered together in the same Churches, and under the same Ministers: It is what we re-quest in our most fervent Prayers.

My Lord, beset him at the same time, with all the Devotion we are capa-ble of, to continue still daily more and more Your *Highness* with his most precious Blessings, to cover You with his powerfull Protection, to preserve You from all your Dangers; that he may preserve both You, My Lord, and His Majesty, this illustrious Spouse; and that he bring forth from Your *Highness*, such a happy Progeny, which may supply *England* with Kings, and the Church with Pastors, to the most remote Ages. We are, with an inviolable Respect, Vene-ration, and Duty,

My Lord, Your *Highness*,

Your most Humble, most Obedient, and

most submission Servants. N. N.

